

BORN TO BE WILD

Big cats even circus trainers can't tame

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HUNGER BUSTING YOGHURT

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THE YOUNG DYLAN

Pop's new generation

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NEW ON SATURDAYS

THE TIMES FOR ONLY

20P

Journalists meet the terrorists on eve of Mowlam's visit

Open day at the Maze prison

By Audrey Magee and Andrew Pierce

MO MOWLAM took another controversial step in her attempt to save the Northern Ireland peace process yesterday by offering to meet IRA prisoners as well as loyalists when she visits the Maze prison today.

The IRA "officer in command" Padraig Wilson said that his men were deliberating the invitation. The loyalists who will certainly meet Dr Mowlam meanwhile held court as the gates of the jail were opened to the media for the first time.

The idea was to prove that the authorities had not surrendered control to the 550 inmates and to counter reports that the prison was run like a holiday camp with sex, drugs and drink readily available.

But the governor conceded that he "co-operated" with the IRA and the loyalist Ulster Defence Association and Ulster Volunteer Force, which ran their wings along army lines — the IRA being the strictest and most regimented. The walls are decorated with paramilitary murals, crests and mottoes such as "no surrender" and "welcome to west Belfast".

Michael Stone of the UDA, who is serving 30 years for murdering three mourners at an IRA funeral, and Sam McGorry of the Ulster Freedom Fighters, jailed for 16 years for attempted murder, happily posed for pictures at the entrance to H-block 7, where a slogan declares: "Better to die on your feet than live on your knees in an Irish republic".

Both men — and the IRA men in H-block 8 — insisted that the public view of the Maze was all wrong. "There is no booze. There is no sex and we do not have guns," McGorry said. "We find it quite funny to read some of the things written about us, but it is very embarrassing and humiliating to our families. The majority of people in here are health and



Loyalist negotiators: triple murderer Michael Stone (left) and Sam McGorry, in for attempted murder, will see Dr Mowlam today

fitness fanatics, half are on a free or vegan diet, not running around as junks," McGorry said. "We were in control I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you. I'd be out there, away through those gates. The responsibility of the

people who manage this jail is to keep us here. It's our duty as political prisoners to get out. To stage an escape whenever we can, and we have only managed that once — Liam Averill — since 1983.

It was Averill's escape, disguised as a woman visitor, shortly before Christmas, coupled with the murder of the Loyalist Volunteer Force leader Billy Wright that led to renewed attacks on the

jail's security — and ultimately to yesterday's open day.

"I am doing this because public confidence has slipped," the governor Martin Mogg, said. "I do not think it is a lax regime and I think it is quite appropriate for people who are spending lifetimes in jail," he pointed to the 300 security cameras, the 30ft wall, the wires draped across the prison yard to stop helicopters, the heavy iron gates, the razor wire round the fences and the central locking system that allows only one gate to open at a time.

But even as he did so, the guards were undermining what he had to say. "Don't believe a word they or the governor tell you," he said after confirming that prisoners had been subjected to an unusually exhaustive search yesterday. "This place is a joke. It's a half. You don't know the half of it and neither does Mo Mowlam. I don't think her coming here will make a damn bit of difference. There is no reasoning with these boys, none whatsoever."

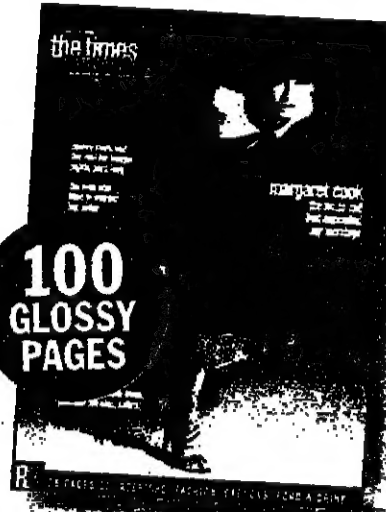
Dr Mowlam will be the first Secretary of State to visit terrorist prisoners when she and her two deputies step through the prison gates today and in doing so she is taking a huge political risk. She was given strong backing by the Cabinet yesterday.

Her aim is to persuade the loyalist prisoners to stick with the talks at Stormont — and she resumed on Monday — and she told colleagues that hard work and goodwill could keep the process on track. Tony Blair said that she was doing a "superb job".

But Unionists and the Conservatives condemned her tactics. Lord Tebbit, whose wife was crippled in the Brighton bombing of 1984, said: "I cannot conceive that it is appropriate for the

John Lloyd, page 20
Letters, page 21

TOMORROW IN THE TIMES



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Dewar to run for top Scottish job

Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary, ended months of speculation by confirming that he will stand for election to a Scottish parliament.

His decision, announced after a meeting with Tony Blair, puts him in the running for the post of Scotland's First Minister. Page 2

Race still on

The race to make the first round-the-world trip by hot air balloon remains wide open after the latest attempt by an international team in the Swiss Alps failed. Page 13

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Cook marriage ended with call from Blair press chief

By Dominic Kennedy

TONY BLAIR sent a handwritten letter to the cast off wife of Robin Cook expressing sympathy over the media coverage of the Foreign Secretary's illicit affair, but omitting to say he was sorry that their 28-year marriage was over.

Margaret Cook, 52, a mother of two, fired off an angry response to Downing Street and asked for a meeting with the Prime Minister or Peter Mandelson because of the important part she said they had played in the ending of her marriage.

In an interview for a book, Westminster Women, Mrs Cook says that her marriage finished after a telephone call from Alistair Campbell, Mr Blair's press secretary. The couple had stayed together despite her assertion that her husband had had several affairs over the years. Mrs Cook knew about her husband's

most recent, with Gaynor Regan, his secretary.

The Foreign Secretary and his wife were being driven to Heathrow airport on Friday, August 1, last year, en route to Montana for a riding holiday, when Mr Cook's mobile telephone rang with a call from Mr Campbell, giving him instructions. At Terminal 4, Mr Cook asked for a VIP room to talk privately to his wife,

closed the door and told her the News of the World had "got the story". He said he had been told he could not leave the country, so the holiday was cancelled. He ended the marriage there and then.

Mr Cook then told their eldest son, Chris, who had come to the airport to see them off, that he was having an affair with his secretary and was leaving Mrs Cook.

"It's selfish that men should expect it all," Mrs Cook says in an interview with Linda McDougall, the book's author, who is married to the Labour MP Austin Mitchell.

Mr Blair's letter said that he and Cherie were very sad and supportive about the pressures of press and public attention that Mrs Cook had to put up with. She wrote back, asking whether they were also sad and supportive about her ruined marriage.



Full interview with Margaret Cook in tomorrow's Magazine

Chinese swim into drug row

By Craig Lord in Perth

CUSTOMS officers found what they believe is illegal human growth hormone when a Chinese swimming team arrived in Australia for the world championships last night.

A total of 26 vials were sent for laboratory tests. They were found in a bag belonging to Yuan Yuan, 21, one of the world's fastest breaststroke swimmers. Yuan said she was carrying the vials for a Chinese doctor in Australia. An official for the swimming team said the vials contained nothing more than "turtle jelly", a Chinese tonic.

Last October, two Chinese women broke the last two remaining world records set by East Germans, raising speculation about drug taking.

China in dock, page 48

£2m bill to repair Selsey's tornado damage

By Richard Duce and Emma Wilkins

A HUGE repair operation is taking place in Selsey, West Sussex, after a 100mph tornado cut through the town and damaged 1,000 buildings.

The bill facing the town of 10,000 people, still recovering from force 12 winds last weekend, could rise beyond £2 million after the freak whirlwind struck just before midnight on Wednesday.

The tornado, preceded by thunderstorms and hailstones three quarters of an inch in diameter, swept in from the west of the peninsula and left a trail of destruction along its two-mile path before moving out to sea again and causing more devastation in northern

France. The wind hit for no more than a few seconds but ripped countless slates from roofs, knocked down chimneys, sucked out windows and wrecked garden sheds and garages. It is estimated a fifth of all properties was affected by the tornado.

West Sussex County Council yesterday brought its emergency planning procedure into action and more than 120 firemen from across the county were drafted in to help make houses and shops safe. An emergency shelter was set up in the high street parish hall.

Despite the ferocity of the wind only two people suffered minor injuries and only two homes were rendered uninhabitable. Jeremy Wearn hid under the doves cover as the freak wind struck and

emerged to find his bedroom wall had been blown down.

Patrick Moore, the astronomer who lives in a 15th-century house in the town, lost the roof of one of his three garden observatories. Mr Moore, 74, presenter of the BBC's Sky at Night, said: "There was a clap of thunder followed by a tremendous rushing wind. I realised it was a tornado straightaway. It was like a mighty train."

Police and firemen stayed in the town last night to monitor the damage and homeowners were warned not to be taken in by "cowboy" builders offering their services.

Armageddon, page 3
Forecast, page 24



Just this once I really do think you should have a look

HIS NEW BESTSELLER

JACK HIGGINS



DRINK WITH THE DEVIL

SETTING THE PACE FOR A THRILLING 1998

OUT NOW IN PAPERBACK

Dewar to run for Scotland's top job

BY GILLIAN HARRIS, SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

DONALD DEWAR, the Scottish Secretary, ended months of speculation by confirming he would stand for election to a Scottish parliament.

His decision, announced yesterday after a meeting with Tony Blair, the Prime Minister, puts him in the running for the post of Scotland's First Minister and leader of the Edinburgh-based parliament which opens in January 2000.

In a statement Mr Dewar said: "For many years I have been a strong supporter of a Scottish parliament — committed and convinced of the need for radical reform within the United Kingdom. I have been fortunate in being given the task of producing the White Paper and now the Scotland Bill.

"I have been concerned to make sure that the scheme was right and fully met the expectations of Scotland

Salmond, one of Labour's coalition partners during last year's referendum campaign, described the Scottish Secretary as a "worthy opponent". But he said it was too early to speculate about his elevation to First Minister.

"Arrogance seems to be creeping into Labour's soul," he said. "It is presumptuous to assume that he will become First Minister. The issue of who will be First Minister is for the people of Scotland to determine in elections to the parliament."

Raymond Robertson, the chairman of the Scottish Tory Party, said: "There are apparently no bounds to Labour's arrogance if they believe they will automatically command a majority in the Scottish parliament."

The Scotland Bill states that the First Minister will be elected by members of the party which holds an overall majority in the Scottish parliament. In the event of a hung parliament the First Minister would be chosen by the coalition parties.

Merzies Campbell, the home affairs spokesman for the Scottish Liberal Democrats, said Mr Dewar had made an "entirely logical" decision to stand. "He will be a commanding presence in the Scottish parliament and has the advantage of being highly regarded across the political spectrum," he said.

Mr Dewar's unprecedented popularity in Scotland stems from his successful delivery of the Home Rule White Paper and the Scotland Bill within six months of Labour's general election victory. Along with his coalition partners, he campaigned to bring about the first Scottish parliament in almost 300 years.

Earlier this week the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, who was expected to stand as a Scottish candidate, ruled himself out of the contest, leaving the way clear for Mr Dewar. Last night Mr Cook "warmly welcomed" his Cabinet colleague's decision to stand.

Now that he has delighted his supporters by agreeing to stand as a Member of the Scottish Parliament, Mr Dewar faces a selection process which has yet to be finalised. The Scottish executive of the Labour party will meet on January 17 to agree procedures for the parliamentary elections due to take place in May next year.

Leading article, page 21

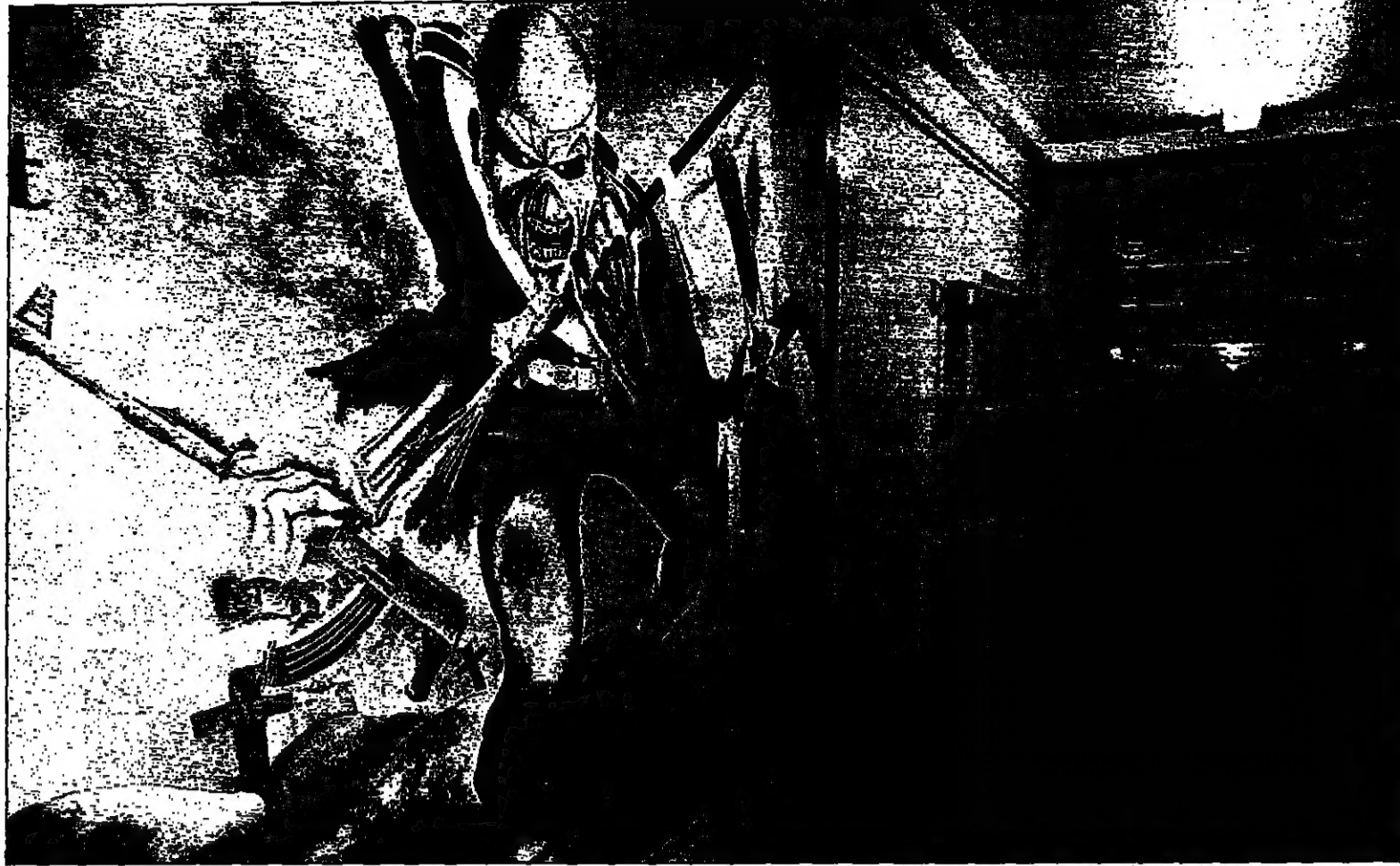


Dewar committed to radical reform

which were so clearly shown in the general election and in the subsequent referendum. Now, with the Bill published, I feel it is the right time to make clear my own intentions."

After their meeting Mr Blair expressed his regret that Mr Dewar would be leaving Westminster, but added that he had encouraged the Scottish Secretary to make the move. "Of course he will be a loss to us, the Government, but I believe that by standing for the Scottish parliament he will enhance both the Scottish system and the whole British political system. It is a decision I very much welcome and indeed I actively encouraged this coming about."

Mr Dewar's announcement, although widely anticipated, was welcomed cautiously by opposition politicians. The leader of the Scottish National Party, Alex



A Loyalist mural at the Maze Prison near Belfast, which Mo Mowlam is visiting today in the hope of saving the Ulster peace process

Terrorists hold court on Maze open day

Secretary of State to go to a jail to plead with murderers, bombers and extortionists whether they are loyalists or republicans. Once that door has been opened she will find it difficult to shut again."

And Peter Robinson, deputy leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, accused Dr Mowlam of preparing to grovel to the paramilitaries. Ordinary decent people were not listened to by the Secretary of State who "only has ears for the gunmen and bombers".

Much depends on the loyalist prisoners' assessment of Dr Mowlam today and while they saw her visit as a positive move, they refused to predict any outcome. Bobby Philpott, who is serving 17 years for attempted murder and is one of the five loyalists due to meet the minister today, said: "It's on a knife-edge." Stone said: "We will be there to listen, not negotiate."

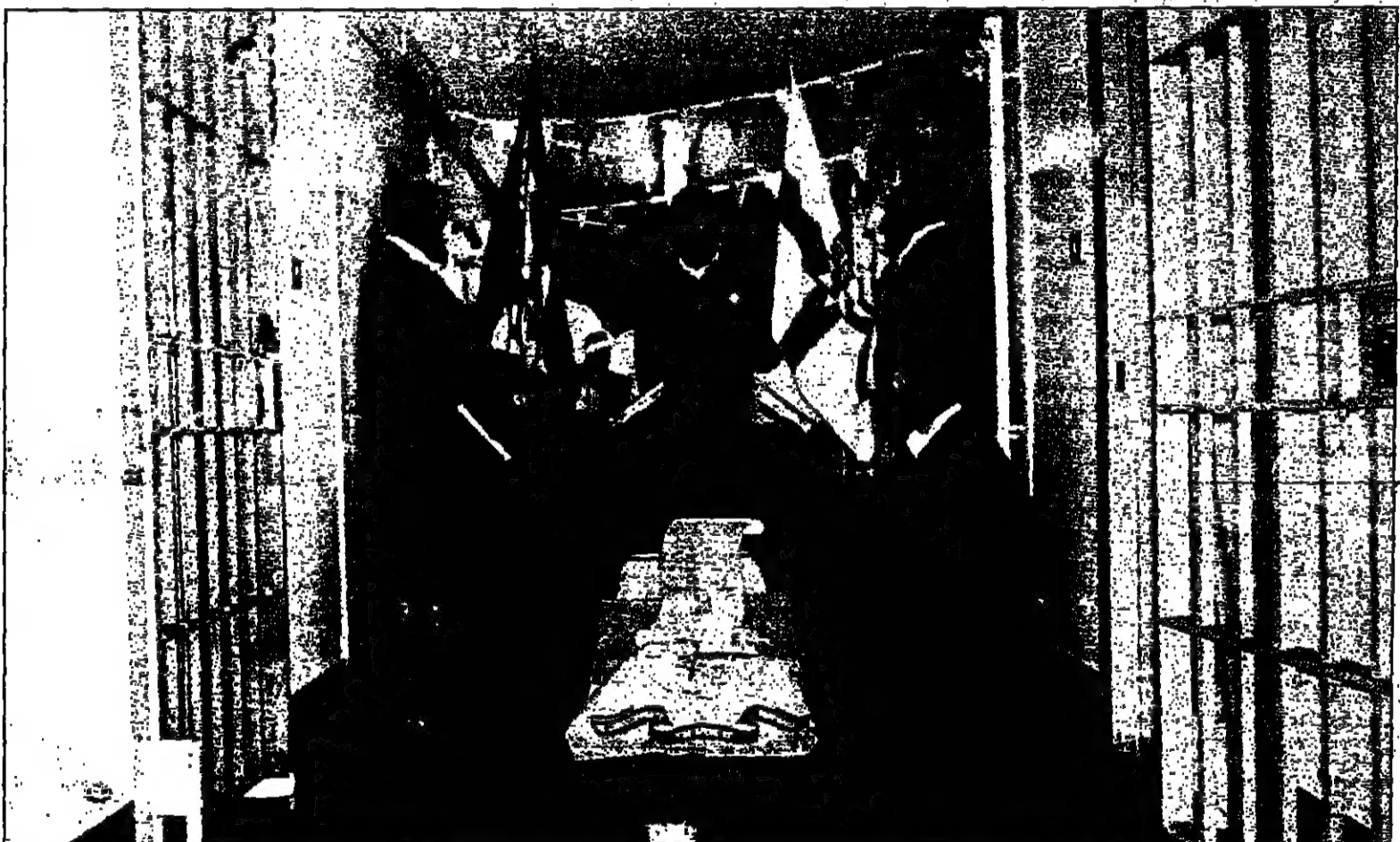
Hours earlier, he had sat on his cell bed listening to a radio appeal by the daughter of one of his victims, calling

on all sides to give peace a chance. Now Stone stood before reporters in heavy black boots, jeans and white shirt, his greying hair set back in a ponytail and said: "I felt for that girl. She is very brave in what she says. It must be difficult for her. In the same way it's difficult for loyalists or even Kelly, the Shankill bomber."

"I suppose if she (Mowlam) met him, loyalists wouldn't be too happy about it. But that girl seems a bit bigger than politicians who've criticised this meeting." Asked if he felt any guilt about killing her father, Sean Fea activist Paddy Brady, he said: "Regrets. We're all only human. But I'm a volunteer. He was a volunteer."

"There was a war going on and I was out there. Of course all deaths were regrettable. But I'm a volunteer, a soldier. If there was no war, I wouldn't be here."

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Loyalist Volunteer Force prisoners at the Maze paying a final tribute to murdered leader Billy Wright who was shot in the prison last month

Sitting down with Bobby, Mad Dog and Titch

BY ANDREW PIERCE
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

WHEN Mo Mowlam walks into the Maze prison today she will sit at a table in one of Europe's most security-conscious jails with some of the most notorious terrorists in Northern Ireland.

The Loyalist line-up includes four leading members of the Ulster Defence Association and the commander of the Ulster Freedom Fighters who is known as "Mad Dog". They are serving combined sentences of more than 100 years.

Michael Stone, 41, a member of the four-man Ulster Defence Association camp council, is serving a 30-year sentence for the indiscriminate killings of mourners at the funeral of three IRA terrorists killed by the SAS at Gibraltar.

Robert "Bobby" Philpott, 40, from Lisburn, is serving 15 years for attempting to murder a man and woman at a mobile home in Lisburn in October 1992. The woman was shot in the face but survived. Philpott was wounded when the male occupant of the mobile home returned fire with a shotgun. He bears the scars of the encounter on his right arm.

Glen "Titch" Cunningham, 30, from the Tynedale district of Belfast, was jailed for 25 years for the attempted murder of a Catholic man who came under attack when he went to investigate noises in his garden in March 1992.

Sam McCrory, 30, from the Shankill area of Belfast, is serving 16 years for attempted murder in Belfast on July 18, 1992. One member of his UDF gang was shot in the legs by police after their two-car convoy was stopped at a checkpoint. He is tattooed from head to toe, including his face.

Johnny "Mad Dog" Adair, 33, the commander of the Ulster Freedom Fighters Association. He is serving 16 years for leading the outlawed group during a period when the terrorist group admitted carrying out numerous murders. The police describe him as "sinister and manipulative".

Intelligence sources believe he has been responsible for the killings of up to 12 Catholics in attacks on bars and houses and involved in the planning of others.

In 1993 he was asked by a Roman Catholic newspaper if he had ever had a Catholic in his car before. He replied: "Only a dead one." He has described Michael Stone as a "real hero". He has met the Secretary of State twice before when she was Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary.

Labour expels defiant MEPs

BY JAMES LANDALE

TWO Labour MEPs were expelled from the party for the first time in its history yesterday as Tony Blair sought to stamp out further internal revolt in Strasbourg.

Ken Coates, MEP for North Nottinghamshire and Cheshire, and Hugh Kerr, MEP for Essex West and Herefordshire East, have repeatedly criticised the party leadership over planned benefit cuts and selection procedures for the European elections. Both were

told that their decision to ally themselves temporarily with the Green Party Group in the European Parliament and to sit as Independent Labour members was "fundamentally inconsistent" with party membership rules.

The MEPs have already been expelled from the European Labour Party and the Socialist Group at the Parliament. Their expulsion, ordered by Tom Sawyer, Labour's General Secretary, will be confirmed by the National Executive Committee

later this month. The severity of the move is emphasised by its rarity.

No Labour MEP has ever been expelled from the party. The last Labour MEPs to be expelled were Dave Nellist and Terry Fields in 1991 for their membership of Militant. MEPs more recently involved in controversy, such as Tommy Graham, MP for West Renfrewshire, and Mohammed Sarwar, MP for Glasgow Govan, have merely been suspended from the party.

Mr Kerr and Mr Coates accused the party leadership of planning to use new proportional representation selection procedures for the 1999 European elections to purge Old Labour MEPs such as themselves from the lists. They had come under pressure from the party leadership and their local parties to resign voluntarily, but they refused.

In a joint statement, they said they were not surprised by the decision, but were appalled at the way it was taken. They said only the NEC could order expulsions.

Portillo wants election re-match

BY POLLY NEWTON

MICHAEL PORTILLO has said that he might stand for Parliament again in Enfield Southgate, the seat that he lost to Labour in one of the biggest upsets of the general election.

The former Defence Secretary said in an interview for a local newspaper that he wanted to return to the Commons and would consider contesting his former constituency, which was won by Stephen Twigg with a swing to Labour of more than 17 per cent.

Mr Portillo, who held the seat with a majority of 15,000 in 1992, said: "I don't think I would find it particularly difficult

to stand there again. I think the Tories can get back in Enfield."

He was less clear on the subject of his Conservative leadership ambitions. Questioned by a reporter from the *Enfield Gazette*, he said: "The dogs bark and the caravan moves on."

However, he was full of praise for William Hague. "He has great intelligence, firm views and is very witty," but, in an acknowledgement that Mr Hague has so far failed to impress voters, he said: "I can't believe that sooner or later these qualities won't come across to the public."

Mr Portillo also had complimentary words about his successor, saying that

Mr Twigg had thrown himself very well into the job of MP for Enfield Southgate.

But he gave a warning that, as one of only four openly homosexual MPs sitting in the Commons, Mr Twigg could find himself labelled as a single issue campaigner.

"It's such a promising person he's made a mistake getting himself pigeon-holed in the homosexuality issue."

"When this happens it's very difficult for people to see him in any other way. It will be a breakthrough when homosexuality doesn't even merit a comment either way."

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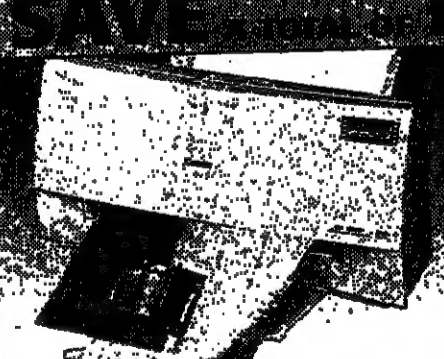
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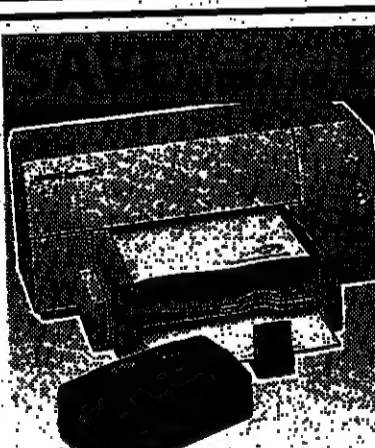
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مكتبة النور

Circus man may face charge on shot tiger

A MEMBER of the Chipperfield circus family could face criminal charges for shooting dead a Bengal tiger after it savaged his brother. The 21-stone animal is said to have been securely returned to its cage before Graham Chipperfield walked up and fired a shotgun five times.

Police at St Petersburg, Florida, said that Mr Chipperfield, 23, had been "in a very emotional state" after seeing his brother attacked. However, state law allows the use of fatal force against dangerous animals only when the animal is posing a danger.

Possible charges include cruelty to an animal and discharging a firearm in a public building, which carries a maximum penalty of five years in jail for first-time offenders. Mr Chipperfield's brother Richard, 24, had spent four years raising the tiger Arnold from a cub. The two men and 12 tigers in the Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Circus were posing for promotional photographs when the younger brother

Police say that animal was secure in cage when it was killed by the brother of Chipperfield victim.

From Graham Dudman in Miami

placed his head near the tiger's jaws and made a fluttering sound that tigers take as a sound of affection. Arnold did what he would to another tiger to show affection — and put his powerful jaws round the head.

Employing a fire extinguisher and circus whip, Graham Chipperfield and an assistant managed to prize open the tiger's mouth before locking the tigers safely in their cages. However, Richard received massive head injuries. Last night he was in a critical but stable condition in the intensive care unit of St Petersburg's Bayfront Medical Centre after a three-hour operation.

Bill Doniel, a spokesman

for St Petersburg Police, said: "The first officer arrived at the scene as Richard was being given medical attention. He saw Graham and other circus staff move 12 tigers from the ring into individual transport cages after the attack."

The tiger that attacked was safe and secure when Graham picked up a shotgun and fired five times at point blank range. The officer immediately told him to drop the gun, which he did.

"Graham was obviously in a very emotional state after seeing his brother's head ripped apart and that played a major part in explaining his actions. He told our officer he thought the tiger was agitated. The animal had tasted blood

and he didn't want to take any chances. He claimed he had checked to make sure there was nobody behind the cage in his line of fire. The shotgun was his private weapon. The circus does not allow staff to have weapons."

The decision on whether to prosecute will rest with the State Attorney. He will definitely take into consideration the circumstances.

Officials from the US Department of Agriculture, which investigates cruelty to circus animals, visited the scene but left saying they were satisfied with safety standards at the circus.

A housewife, Tammy Guthrie, who took her two children to the circus last Sunday, drove to the big top to leave flowers for the tiger after hearing about the shooting on radio. She said: "I feel bad for the man that was hurt but he didn't have to be in that situation to begin with if they didn't have the tigers in their act."

Leading article, page 21



Graham Chipperfield, left, who shot the tiger five times, with his brother Richard, who is in intensive care

Family is used to dangers in the ring

By HELEN JOHNSTONE

THE Chipperfield dynasty has generally been spared from maulings by the big cats they have used to enthral circus audiences throughout the world for over 313 years.

However, a death and several serious incidents in recent years served as a reminder of the dangers that one of the world's leading circus families face daily. Richard Chipperfield's father, Dick, was bitten on the head and body by a panther in a similar incident in the mid-1970s. He required 30 stitches in his head, legs and arms after the animal turned on him during a performance in London.

Recalling the incident, circus historian Don Stacey said: "It was serious enough at the time. He had been lying on the ground calling five big cats to lie over him when one just swiped at him for no apparent reason."

Richard's brother, Graham, who shot the tiger that mauled Richard, was himself attacked by a lion in a rehearsal soon after he arrived in America in 1993. He was saved by an assistant who was in the cage with him — and by his leather jacket. Mr Stacey, editor of the

weekly circus magazine *World Fair*, said: "He was in intensive care for several days."

Graham was also injured on the circus's opening night in New York when a lion he had trained to stage a mock attack on him got too enthusiastic and hit him in the mouth with a paw. The result was two lost teeth and a further reminder of the dangers he chooses to face.

Dick's uncle, Jimmy Chipperfield, was injured when wrestling with a bear for a stunt. He lost a kidney as a result of an unexpected attack and left the circus in the 1950s to train wild animals for film and television. Some years later his daughter, Mary, lost the top of a finger to a big cat.

The only death happened in 1932 when Tommy Purchase, brother-in-law of Jimmy Chipperfield, was mauled by a lion, despite an attempt to rescue him by Dick Chipperfield's father.

Commenting on the family's record, Mr Stacey added: "The Chipperfields have always been regarded as one of the safest in the business and have been relatively accident free."



Dangerous even after many years of domestication

A tiger can never change its stripes

By NICK NUTTALL

NO MATTER how domesticated a performing tiger may appear to be, its dangerous natural instincts are always lurking just below the surface, experts said yesterday.

Tricia Hodson, manager of the Born Free Foundation's big cat programme, said: "You can never breed out or subdominate a tiger's basic instincts. It is a solitary, predatory, animal. These behaviours will always be lurking beneath the surface."

"Look at the domestic cat. We have been domesticating it for thousands of years and it still wants to go out and hunt birds and mice. You cannot take away predatory or social behaviour like this."

Nick Ellerton, curator of mammals at Chester Zoo, agreed. He said many circus tigers were Bengal hybrids that have been bred in captivity for generations. "But I would not trust one," he said. He said circuses can create

dangerous tensions among big cats, which are territorial in the wild. "Sitting eight tigers around in close proximity to each other could create conflicts that are taken out on the trainer," Mr Ellerton said.

Mrs Hodson said they had recently rescued eight tigers from a circus in Italy. She said their wild instincts had re-emerged within weeks.

"In Italy the animals may have appeared subdued to the people who fed them. But when they turned their backs the animals were up to the bars in the hunting position," she said.

Peter Jackson, chairman of the World Conservation Union's cat specialist group, said that the most dangerous tigers in the wild were Bengals from west Bengal and neighbouring Bangladesh. "There are accounts of tigers swimming out to take fishermen from their boats,"



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Secret papers disclose a threatened pay strike, reports **Richard Ford**

The official praised the union, which had acted "very discreetly" and then added: "We have also told the Palace that the intervention of a union may not be an unmitigated nuisance, because it may help to prevent further discontents and kill at birth many minor grievances".

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'Smart' yoghurt tricks dieters into feeling full

By PAUL DURMAN AND DAMIAN WHITWORTH

A YOGHURT that is said to trick the brain into thinking the stomach is full went on sale in Sweden yesterday at twice the price of normal yoghurts. It is due to be introduced in Britain later this year.

The latest "smart-food" development in dietary aids relies on an ingredient called Olibra developed by Scotta Holdings, a British drug company. The yoghurt Maval - Swedish for "feeling good" - is being made with a Swedish dairy company. Last night, nutritionists in Britain called for more tests.

Olibra works by encouraging the small intestine to release peptides that tell the brain the body is full. People who took part in trials in Northern Ireland felt less hungry even four hours after eating yoghurt containing Olibra than those who ate

SWEET-TOOTHED

Britons spent more than £5 billion on sweets and chocolate last year. The 1997 Confectionary Market Review showed that we each eat an average of 16kg in sweets per year, the most in the world. Cadbury's Dairy Milk continues to be the bestselling chocolate, followed by Mars and Twix, the bestselling sweet is Wrigley's Extra chewing gum.

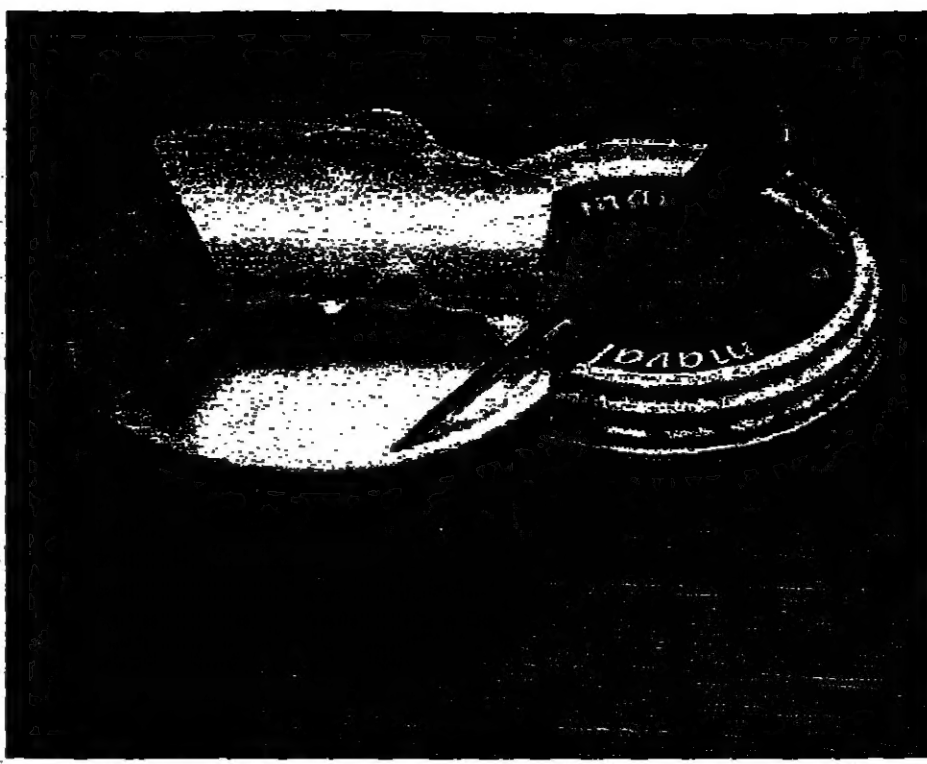
normal yoghurt. At a buffet meal, Olibra eaters consumed 16 per cent fewer calories than normal yoghurt eaters, and, in particular, reduced their fat intake.

Researchers at the University of Ulster found that the

results were even more marked among women. They reduced their overall calorie intake at the buffet by 22 per cent after eating yoghurt containing Olibra. The British company argues there are no concerns for safety because the creamy emulsion that is at the heart of the yoghurt is based on a mixture of palm oil and oil, which occur naturally.

However, Amanda Wynne of the British Nutrition Foundation said she was concerned that the test results on the yoghurt had not been subjected to a proper peer review.

Toni Sanders, professor of nutrition at King's College, London, said: "These short-term studies don't reflect what happens in the longer term. They are hyping it up to go on the market, flogging it as a functional ingredient in food. To me, it stinks of snake oil



Maval was on sale in Sweden yesterday: nutritionists want more research

and cashing in on obesity, which is really a very serious problem."

David Horrobin, who has recently stepped down as Scotta's chief executive, said that unlike the appetite-suppressing drugs that have caused heart problems, Scotta's Olibra emulsion works by speeding up the natural actions of the small intestine. Scotta said that other prod-

ucts ranging from fruit drinks, soups, biscuits and even the holy grail of slimmers - chocolate that helps people to lose weight - could be launched in Britain soon. Dr Robert Dow, of Scotta, said the product was not a weight loss miracle for overweight people, but could help people maintain a healthy diet. "Obesity is the largest health problem in the devel-

oped world," he said. "We have to teach people to diet better, exercise better, and not to eat too much food in the first place. This will be one of the ways of helping them to do this. It could help them to lose weight."

Aldwych bus bomb survivor died an addict

By PETER FOSTER

A HEROIN addict who tried to give up his habit after he survived the Aldwych bus bomb in central London died because of "inadequate care" at a private hospital, an inquest was told yesterday.

Brendan Woolhead, 34, signed up for a controversial new detoxification treatment six months after suffering head and pelvic injuries in the February 1996 bomb blast that killed an IRA terrorist.

The inquest heard how he and Gillian Cox, the mother of his son, moved to London after hearing about the revolutionary new treatment for addicts that cost £4,700 and was available only at private clinics. Ultra Rapid Opiate Detoxification treats addicts using a cocktail of drugs under general anaesthetic that is designed to block the uptake of heroin in the brain and reduce withdrawal symptoms.

At an earlier hearing the Westminster inquest was told how Woolhead checked into the London Wellbeck Hospital in Marylebone on October 3,

1996. When the anaesthetic wore off he was taken from intensive care to his room. Later he complained of a headache, had a seizure and died of a heart attack, despite the efforts of medical crews.

Last April the inquest was adjourned after two days and the case file referred to the Crown Prosecution Service after two leading medical experts said they believed Woolhead's death had been caused by "reckless" and "grossly negligent" behaviour by the hospital. Yesterday police told Dr Paul Knapman, the coroner, that no criminal charges would be brought.

A post-mortem examination showed that Woolhead had taken heroin between coming round from the anaesthetic and his death 12 hours later.

Returning a verdict of misadventure, the jury said Woolhead had died from "a heart attack and a fit resulting from inadequate care". His family said they would be taking action against the hospital.

£239,000 sea search for lost sailor ends at council house

By BILL HOFFMANN

A MOBILE telephone call to coastguards early yesterday morning sparked a major search and rescue operation for a lone sailor cast adrift in mountainous seas off the coast of Ireland.

The caller said that his 42ft catamaran, the *Naomi*, was taking on water and had lost power, knocking out all navigational and communication aids. He rang back a short time later, saying that he was talking to his liferaft and believed he was somewhere near Rathlin Island, off Northern Ireland's Co Antrim coast.

For six hours, two RAF Humrods, two air force helicopters, a Royal Navy helicopter, 30 lifeboats and 100 emergency personnel combed the storm-whipped seas between Northern Ireland and Scotland searching for the stricken sailor. As darkness threatened to hinder the operation police called in a mobile-phone expert to try to trace the man's position. The signal led police to a council house in Ingle, near Preston, Lancashire.

Police broke in and found a man in the living room with a mobile phone and a bottle of rum. Last night a police spokesman said the cost of the six-hour operation - the largest rescue operation at sea in the past three years - was calculated at more than £239,000.

The two RAF helicopters cost £2,500 an hour to operate and up to 30 lifeboats includ-

ing five all-weather craft which cost £5,800 each with crews and equipment to dispatch.

A spokesman for the Coastguard said: "Normally it is quite easy to spot a boat call by checking the phone number or asking people about landmarks they can see, but this was a very elaborate and well-planned hoax."

Colin Duncan, Belfast coastguard district controller said: "Can I give a reasonable explanation as to why he did it? No I can't. But he put a lot of lives in jeopardy with his actions."

Authorities acted with extra urgency to dispatch rescue teams because of a dire weather forecast that predicted a fierce frontal storm system by nightfall in the Irish sea.

The Coastguard last year received 11,291 calls, of which 251 were hoaxes.

A spokesman for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, which was involved in the search, said: "The Coastguard is the eyes and the ears of any sea alert and we obviously do get involved in hoaxes. When the weather gets bad like this we always get more calls from strange people who seem to get some kick out of it. Maybe these people should think of the lives they put at risk before making that call."

A man is due to appear before magistrates today on charges under Section 43 of the Telecommunications Act 1984.

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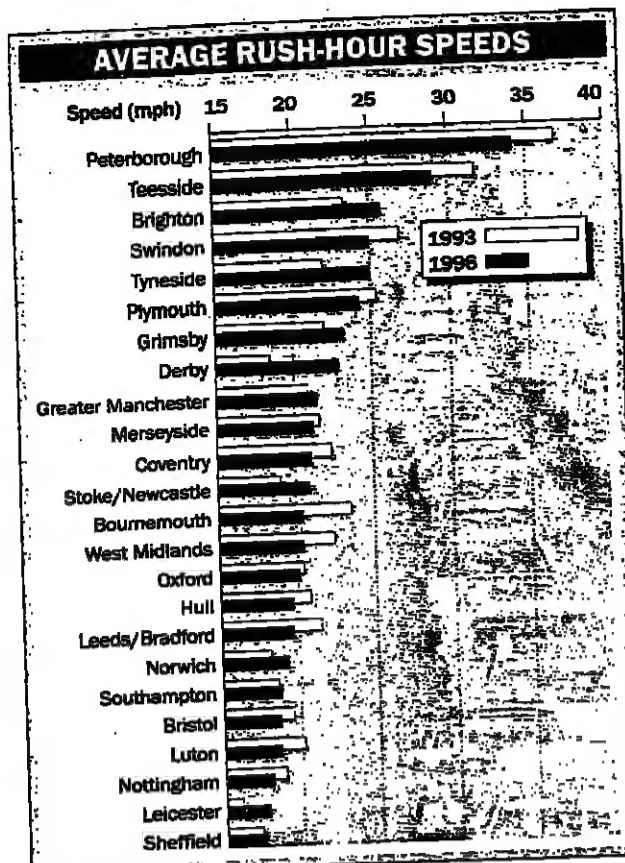
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Britain takes the slow road to clearer cities



BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

MOTORISTS who boil over when crawling along in rush-hour traffic should steer clear of Sheffield. It has the worst average speed outside London — a measly 17 mph for the daily grind to and from work. Compare that to Peterborough, where drivers can bowl along at an average 34 mph, largely thanks to a network of relatively modern dual carriageways.

However, while rush-hour speeds actually increased in Sheffield from 1993 to 1996, those in Peterborough, the fastest-moving town of 24 surveyed by the Government in the two years, decreased from 37 mph. Also, while retaining the top spot for off-peak periods as well, it has shown the biggest reduction in traffic speeds — 5 mph — in this category.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, and other transport ministers are examining traffic trends as they prepare a White Paper intended to change public attitudes to the car. It is the steps taken by conurbations at the slowest

end of the list that have impressed them the most. Many, including Sheffield, Leicester, Nottingham, Bristol and Southampton, are pioneering schemes to clear roads of unnecessary traffic. Results from many of these schemes, which include park-and-ride projects, traffic charging and improved public transport, are only now beginning to filter through — too late for the 1996 survey.

What the survey does show is a general reduction in speed in most of the towns and cities. 14 recorded a slowing down over three years. Separate studies are conducted into London rush-hour speeds, which have fallen to 11 mph.

In spite of the traffic pressures on some of England's biggest cities, drivers can fare better than those in smaller conurbations: Manchester and Tyneside actually speeded up between 1993 and 1996, thanks in part to improved bus services, seen as the best way to get cars off the roads.

Letters, page 21



One of the few: Claire Drew in the RAF helmet she is helping to develop

Mother aims to be a social engineer

BY LIN JENKINS

A WORKING mother was named Young Woman Engineer of the Year yesterday, and will serve as a role model to attract more women into the profession. Girls are ahead of boys in mathematics and sciences at school, yet only 14 per cent of engineers are female.

Claire Drew, 30, is a systems engineering manager with GEC Marconi Avionics, involved in developing a helmet-mounted display for RAF pilots. After leaving school in Liverpool, she took an HND in electrical and electronic engineering before joining British Aerospace. She said: "I have not been discriminated against. I enjoyed maths and physics at school, and I had encouragement at home."

While she works, her daughter, Natalie, three, is with her husband, a senior watch manager at Dover coastguard station, or her mother, who lives near by.

GEOGRAPHERS' CONFERENCE

Living rough boosts death rate 40 times

REPORTS BY NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

MEN living rough are almost 40 times more likely to die young than contemporaries who have secure homes, the geographers' conference at the University of Surrey was told yesterday. Those who live in hostels fare better, but still have a ten times higher chance of dying prematurely.

Daniel Dorling of the University of Bristol, Nic Brimblecombe and Mary Shaw set out to discover why there were such wide discrepancies in death rates in different electoral wards of Oxford and Brighton. The explanation turned out to be simple: the presence of a hostel or a large number of bed-sits used as temporary accommodation.

Closed-circuit TV spreading in city centres

CLOSED-circuit TV cameras are spreading like a rash. From 78 schemes in 1994 there are now more than 450, Dr Mark Goodwin of the University of Wales in Aberystwyth told the conference.

"Bournemouth has 200 cameras installed; King's Lynn more than 70. As soon as one area has cameras, other neighbouring areas feel more anxious about crime and want them too."

They were particularly effective in deterring rowdiness in city centres after closing time. But the indications were that they displaced crime into neighbouring areas, he said.

by the homeless greatly increased the death rate in that area.

Deaths in the ward of South Oxford are 40 per cent higher than average, while those in North Oxford are 40 per cent lower. The reason is the presence of a hostel in South Oxford which, despite the attempts of staff to help the homeless, fails to bring their death rate down to anywhere near national averages.

The national death rate for men aged between 16 and 29 is 1.1 per thousand per year. Among those on the street, the figure is 41.1. In hostels, it is 11.3.

In older men the gap narrows, so that among those on the street, aged between 30 and 44, some 71.9 per thousand die, compared with the national average of 2.3 per thousand. In those aged between 45 and 65, the rate is 157.6 per thousand, compared with the national average of 7.6.

When all age groups up to 65 are considered as a whole, their death rate is 25 times the average. The finding goes some way towards explaining higher death rates in towns, since the homeless tend to migrate towards places where it is easier to find support by begging, or from charities or social services.

The problem is compounded by the fact that people living on the streets, who face the greatest risk, find it hardest to get a doctor. GPs do not receive their usual payments for treating people who do not have an address.

Two wheels good, say the ramblers

RAMBLERS and mountain-bikers can be friends, despite reports that cyclists were annoying walkers by churning up the countryside.

Andrew Dougill of Salford University and Matt Stroh of Leeds University held the geographers' conference that they had found no animosity between the groups. On the contrary, there was a feeling of camaraderie.

In their study of the Lake

District, it emerged that the presence of other people with a common interest in the outdoors appeared for most walkers to override the feeling that bicycles were out of place on the fells. Of 50 people interviewed, only two volunteered any criticism of mountain-bikers. "So long as the cyclists are courteous and show a respect for the countryside, a community feeling develops," Dr Dougill said.

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CHANGING TIMES

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Hide: service order

Hide may paint for penance

THE boxer Herbie Hide will complete a community service order by carrying out gardening and decorating work with other offenders. Hide, 26, holder of one of the world heavyweight titles, was given a 60-hour community service order by Norwich magistrates last month after admitting using threatening behaviour to two police officers. He had hoped to serve his sentence doing fitness work with youngsters. However, Pip Coker, a senior Norfolk probation officer, said: "We don't have any fitness projects. The work people are assigned is along the lines of decorating for the elderly, or gardening."

Insurance man 'threatened to kill colleagues'

By PAUL WILKINSON

A SUCCESSFUL financial expert sent a series of death threats to colleagues after being suspended just as he was due to fly off with his wife on a company trip to Mexico, a court heard yesterday.

The letters allegedly sent by Richard Burrell to his former colleagues at Legal and General, Britain's second largest insurance company, had a computer-generated picture of a bullet with the words "Death where is thy sting?" and the letters "RIP" below, Leeds Crown Court was told.

Alan Pirie, Mr Burrell's manager and one of the five colleagues who received the threats, received a further anonymous letter in which the writer told how he had bought a 9mm Beretta pistol and said: "It's surprising how easy it is to get hold of a gun these days. There are so many psychopaths about. It's quite worrying to think who could be blown away when someone with a grudge decides there isn't anything left to live for."

Yesterday Mr Burrell, 43, from Bridlington, East Yorkshire, denied six charges of making a threat to kill. Henry Prosser, for the prosecution, said that in May 1995

Mr Burrell and his wife were included in a party from Legal and General offices for the trip to Mexico as a reward for achieving good sales figures.

Seven consultants and their partners were due to fly from Heathrow, but at the last moment Mr Burrell and his wife were barred from the flight.

Later that day Paul O'Hara, Legal and General's North Eastern area manager, rang to tell Mr Burrell he was suspended. Mr Prosser said: "The defendant's response, which was noted down by Mr O'Hara, was that the Legal and General would suffer, and he would sue them for stress, and Alan Pirie would get his lights kicked out."

Four days later Mr O'Hara received a letter saying, "Dear Paul, tell them thanks from me for the heart attack, the extra expense, the waiting around, the stress of trying to keep calm. I will never forgive them for it. Someone will pay dearly for this in retribution."

Ten months later in February 1996 after Mr Burrell had left the company, Mr Pirie and four other consultants received the bullet pictures. Two, addressed to David

Moorhouse and Karen Drinkwater went to the company offices in Leeds, but the others, to Mr Pirie, Andrew McArdle and Raymond Connolly, went to their homes. Mr Connolly's name was misspelled in a particular way and he would say that Burrell was the only person who ever wrote his name like that.

Later that month Mr Pirie received a second letter, talking about the Beretta handgun. "That was a threatening and disturbing letter," said Mr Prosser who told how Mr Burrell set out to lay a false trail.

He went to Bridlington police and showed them a computer-generated picture of a bullet which he said he had been sent. "He told him he had no idea who had sent it but it could possibly be a work colleague," said Mr Prosser.

Mr O'Hara, when asked by John Elvidge, for the defence, why Mr Burrell had been suspended, replied: "I couldn't specifically give a reason. I didn't know. I was just given the instruction to relay it to Mr Burrell." He agreed that Mr Burrell was very successful with Legal and General. The trial continues.



"There are so many psychopaths about," Richard Burrell is alleged to have written.

IN BRIEF

Man jailed for road rage attack with brick

A van driver who threw a half-brick from a bridge at a lorry on the M2 in a road rage incident was jailed for 2½ years at Maidstone Crown Court.

Clive Masters, 40, from Gillingham, Kent, who had been playing cat-and-mouse with Michael Runckles, from Sheppey, Kent, denied damaging property being reckless as to whether life was endangered.

Royal rejection

Colin Fellowes, 60, who claims to be the illegitimate son of Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson, lost his battle at Portsmouth County Court to challenge the monarchy for ownership of Balmoral and Sandringham.

Bingo row

Muslims in Bradford have asked the owners of the Mecca bingo chain to change the name of one of its halls because they are offended by it. Luton Muslims made a similar approach concerning a hall there.

Rapist jailed

Robin Spanner, 61, a taxi driver from North East Portsmouth, was jailed for five years by Winchester Crown Court for raping a 12-year-old girl he met through the Children of God sect 30 years ago. He had admitted assault.

Constable sale

A church court has agreed to allow All Saints Church in Farningham, Essex, to sell a Constable painting of the risen Christ, which hung above the altar, to raise money for heating and repairs. It is expected to fetch about £80,000.

Bird a-laying

Twelfth night has come and gone, but a 35ft Christmas tree will stay on the steps of Norwich City Hall for six weeks after a blackbird built a nest in it and laid at least two eggs four months ahead of schedule.

Climber falls

Martin Moran, 44, a leading British mountaineer, suffered a fractured wrist, elbow, pelvis and ribs after falling about 30ft from the roof of his house in Lechworth, West Essex. He had been fixing slates.

So. class.

The lawless l

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هكذا من الدول

So, class, you think you've got it tough ...

Mark Henderson reports on a trip to New York designed to show children from a problem estate the criminal effects of true deprivation

A PARTY of teenagers from a council-estate notorious for its crime and poverty are to be taken to the Bronx in New York by their American teacher to show them the effects of serious deprivation.

Jim Robertson, 38, who was born and raised in the infamous New York borough, is to lead the party of 37 from King Richard Secondary School in Portsmouth over the half-term break in February. He hopes the teenagers, most of whom live on the troubled Paulsgrove estate, will come back with a new awareness of the realities of genuine poverty and the damage crime can do to a community.

"We hope this trip will plant

"We hope this trip will plant

positive seeds in them of what they could do with their lives," Mr. Roberson said. "Sometimes they think they have a bad lot but they need to see there are people who might be worse off than they are. New York might make them think Paulsboro isn't so bad."

King Richard finished third from bottom in the city in the latest *Times* league tables, 25 per cent of pupils gaining 5 GCSE passes at grade A to C. Paulsgrove is well-known as a problem estate: unemployment runs at 7 per cent and it has an unenviable crime rate. A pub on the estate, The Sociable Flower, was recently closed after a string of violent incidents.

Mr. Roberson, though, thinks hardship on the estate will be put firmly in perspective by conditions in the Bronx, where one in ten adults has no job, fewer than one in five own their own home and crime is endemic. "They will see the whole thing, see what crime does," how it messes everything up," he said. "You don't know how good you got it until you see someone else's stuff."

The problems he encountered growing up in the Bronx dwarfed those he sees in Portsmouth. "My quality of life has improved since I came here. I'm the first person in our family to own a lawnmower."

"I was lucky in a way. My cousin in the Bronx became involved with a black mafia gang. He had been a cop but got involved with drugs in



The effects of crime in the Bronx, epitomised by this commemoration to four boys shot dead, will be only too clear to the pupils, below, with Roberson

Harlem and ended up organising hitmen to take people out. He's now doing 57 years in a federal prison."

The teenagers, many of whom have taken holiday and

Saturday jobs to save the \$400 the trip will cost, said it would be the chance of a lifetime. Most have never been abroad. Terry Clark, 16, said: "I'm more excited about it than I was about Christmas. I'm saving most of my Christmas money." Lisa Sigale, 14, said: "It'll be a really big city atmosphere. I've never been to a city that big."

to the John F Kennedy High School in the Bronx, which has 5,000 pupils and an ethnic mix of 71 per cent Hispanic, 19 per cent black, 5 per cent white and 5 per cent Asian and native American. Twelve of King Richard's 982 pupils are black or Asian.

Mr Roberson, who is an African-American, said of the trip: "Hopefully they will learn that not every black man on the streets will try to mug them."

Education, page 41

Juggling is just the trick for struggling pupils

By DAVID CHARTER

PUPILS and teachers at a failing secondary school with some of the country's worst results are being taught... to juggle. The circus skills technique has been adopted by Chris Lindup, head teacher of Merrywood comprehensive school, to raise self-esteem. The school came second from bottom in Bristol in last summer's GCSEs and inspectors found that up to half the pupils played truant.

Mr Lindup arrived in September having won praise for transforming morale and results at his previous school in the city. Lawrence Weston Comprehensive, which was saved from closure. First he taught juggling to all 70 staff at Merrywood - including teachers, caretakers and cleaners. The older pupils were taught before Christmas and the rest of the 415 children will learn this term.

Mr Lindup said: "The aim is help people raise their own personal performance by increasing their self-belief. The juggling is an important part of it because when you drop a juggling ball you can find out from where it landed where you went wrong when you threw it."

He added: "I use it as an analogy for a lot of concepts — that there is no such thing as failure, only feedback."

School inspectors found literacy and numeracy standards were well below standard at Merrywood, which is located in the Knowle West area of Bristol, where there is 12.5 per cent unemployment. Just 8 per cent of pupils gained five GCSEs at grades A to C last summer.

Mr Lindup said regaining self-esteem was the key to re-kindling the desire to learn. He said the juggling was already producing results. "The kids love it and you hear them talking about it in the corridors—it gives them goals and shows them they can achieve things," he said.

John Ashton, chairman of Bristol's education committee, said: "What Chris is doing is brilliant. It is exactly the sort of leadership needed to deliver in a difficult area."

The lawless lions' den that takes a pride in its notoriety

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN
IN NEW YORK

"THE Bronx? No thank". Ogden Nash once wrote in rhyme — and with reason. A borough of staggering extremes, the Bronx is home to such New York institutions as the Yankee Stadium, the Botanical Garden, and the Bronx Zoo, as well as being a global symbol of crime, decay, violence and social meltdown.

was made there in 1980, starring Paul Newman as a police officer whose routine duties include disarming deranged, knife-wielding thugs, saving single mothers from suicide, chasing muggers, nabbing pimps and arresting prostitutes. The film was regarded as a not-inaccurate portrayal of life in the Bronx.

The borough's notoriety, carefully preserved by its many lawless denizens — particularly in the South Bronx, whose streets are reputed to

THE BRONX		PORTSMOUTH	
JFK High School		King Richard School	
Number of pupils	5,000	Number of pupils	982
Number of teachers	250	Number of teachers	56
Non-white pupils	88%	Non-white pupils	1%
Unemployment	10%	Unemployment	7%
Home ownership	10%	Home ownership	49%
Murders (Bronx, 1993)	361	Murders (Portsmouth, 1993)	3

be less safe than the lion's cage in the zoo nearby — was also enhanced a decade ago with the publication of Tom Wolfe's


bestselling novel *Boysfire of the Vanities*.
The borough is New York's second smallest and the only one

attached to the American mainland. Bought by the Dutch West India Company in 1639 from the Algonquin Indians — who also, rather more rashly, sold Manhattan — it was first settled in 1644 by one Jonas Bronck, who bequeathed his name to the area.

Its decay began in the 1950s, when the era of cheap cars allowed the relatively affluent and tightly knit white community to leave for the countryside. The area was gradually colonised by the poor and given

over to vast, soul-numbing housing projects. The "no hope" flavour has never since been lost.

There has been talk in recent years of a revival, although it would appear to be grounded more in rhetoric than fact. More than \$1 billion has been spent on the area since 1986 in an attempt to ensure "urban regeneration". This, on the whole, has taken the form of campaigns to remove graffiti from walls that seldom stay clean for more than 48 hours.



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Santer lavishes praise on Blair's 'dynamic' nation

JACQUES SANTER hailed Tony Blair as "dynamic, vibrant and creative" yesterday, signalling the warmest relations between Brussels and Britain for more than a decade.

During a day of mutual backslapping, the President of the European Commission welcomed Mr Blair's refreshing approach to the European Union, making clear his relief that he had replaced John Major.

At the launch of Britain's presidency of the European Union, Mr Blair insisted that his Government sought a "strong and leading role in shaping Europe's future", as he and most of the Cabinet met 20 EU commissioners to discuss the programme for the coming six months.

Mr Blair said that since Labour had won the election there had been a new era of "good and close relations with the ministers and European commissioners across a whole range of issues".

The display of friendship continued throughout the day, with Mr Santer insisting that there were "no clouds" between them. The next six months, however, will be dominated by three issues on which Britain is out of tune

Jill Sherman
and Charles

Bremner on the remarkable thaw in relations with Brussels

with Brussels: the single currency, the beef crisis and immigration controls.

Although the Government's decision to stay out of monetary union is casting a shadow over its turn in the presidency, its stewardship is also being welcomed. The Prime Minister and what the French call "le Blairisme" are widely viewed across Europe as a strong, modernising force that could rub off on other governments. British enthusiasm for market forces, though a source of resentment in France, Belgium and parts of Germany, is expected to help to speed the drive for deregulation and broadening the unfinished single market.

After a succession of smaller state presidencies, Britain's

international clout and admired diplomatic expertise are being counted on to help the EU assert itself abroad. Already the Foreign Office has its hands full finding a way to handle Algeria's civil conflict and dealing with Turkey and the linked emergency of the influx of Kurdish refugees. Both items have the potential for hijacking the EU agenda in coming weeks.

The Americans are likely to listen harder to an EU represented by Britain when it comes to tackling the string of trade disputes that are souring relations. In Asia Britain can help to allay the spreading belief that Europe is turning inwards, obsessed with monetary union and its unemployment agony.

Yesterday Mr Santer played down disagreements on the single currency, insisting that Britain could still play an active part in the initial stages. He appeared unconcerned by possible problems ahead, although Mr Blair had again urged Brussels to end the ban on British beef, and also appeared to back demands by Germany for tighter border controls.

Mr Santer told Mr Blair: "I am quite clear that Britain will do its utmost to



Presidency of the

Presidential friends: Tony Blair and Jacques Santer at the launch in London yesterday of Britain's six-month spell at the EU's helm

play a full and constructive role in making the launch of EMU a success. He challenged Mr Blair to take the opportunity provided by the next six months to banish the image of Brussels as a bureaucratic organ and present it as a political organisation aimed at improving the lives of European citizens.

Yesterday afternoon Mr Blair told a press conference: "The presidency presents a very great opportunity for Britain to show that by being

constructive, engaged and positive in Europe, we can play a leading role in shaping Europe's future on the issues that really matter to people — jobs, crime, environment and how people compete best in the changing world economy."

"I have no doubt at all that we will show and demonstrate to the whole of Europe the competence and constructive approach that should mark any successful presidency."

Kurdish refugees, page 16

BRITAIN'S SIX-MONTH EU PRESIDENCY

- 3 Britain takes over the reins from Luxembourg, previous holders of the presidency.
- 29-30 Jack Straw heads an informal meeting of home affairs ministers in Birmingham. Key topics include the battle against drugs and crime, with the Home Secretary pushing for greater cross-border co-operation against organised criminals.
- 30-31 Lord Simon of Highbury, an Irish-born member of the House of Lords, heads a non-EU event but discussion spans the whole of the EU. The day also marks the 25th anniversary of the Schuman day in 1950 when European leaders agreed to pool their resources.
- 31-1 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of finance ministers in London. Key topics include the convergence of the EU economies, the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 1-2 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of foreign affairs ministers in Edinburgh, one of the most important meetings during the presidency. Many key behind-the-scenes decisions tend to be taken at these events.
- 3-4 Feb Conference on Europe's museums in Liverpool.
- 4-5 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 5-6 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 6-7 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 7-8 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 8-9 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 9-10 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 10-11 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 11-12 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 12-13 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 13-14 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 14-15 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 15-16 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 16-17 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 17-18 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 18-19 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 19-20 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 20-21 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 21-22 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 22-23 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 23-24 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 24-25 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 25-26 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 26-27 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 27-28 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 28-29 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.
- 29-30 Feb Gordon Brown heads an informal meeting of justice ministers in London. Key topics include the introduction of the single currency and the role of the EU in the world.

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Japan to be told Britain is best for investment

By Philip Webster and Robert Whyman

TONY BLAIR will tell Japanese companies today that Britain remains the right place for them to invest in Europe in spite of Labour's decision to stay out of the single currency.

The Prime Minister flew to Japan last night intending to highlight both Britain's favourable position as a gateway to the European market and the constructive role it will play over the launch of economic and monetary union.

In a speech today at the start of his five-day visit he will declare: "Britain is not just a safe bet with a Labour Government, but a better bet."

Trade heads Mr Blair's agenda and his first meeting in Tokyo today will be with Hiroshi Okuda, president of Toyota, which recently announced it was building a new 2,000-job assembly plant in northern France rather than Britain. Toyota is expected to confirm at the meeting that it will invest a further £240 million in its engine plant in North Wales.

The company, Japan's largest carmaker, is understood to have delayed the announcement until Mr Blair's visit at the request of Downing Street. The publicity will reinforce the Prime

Minister's message that Britain under Labour is a good place to invest. Helping him to convince Japanese companies of that will be a delegation of 12 leading businessmen, including Sir Colin Marshall, president of the CBI, and Sir Iain Vallance, chairman of BT.

During what is his first visit to Japan since becoming Prime Minister, Mr Blair will hold talks with his Japanese counterpart, Ryutaro Hashimoto, and other senior ministers. He will also take part in an EU-Japan summit with Mr Hashimoto and Jacques Santer, president of the European Commission, and will have an audience with Emperor Akihito at the Imperial Palace.

Mr Blair will launch a year-long festival of British art and culture. Festival UK 98, which is expected to include the same giddy presentation of modern Britain that Mr Blair displayed at the Commonwealth Conference, will include a portable pavilion that will be moved around Japan.

Stephenson's 'Rocked' will be on show and there will be Japanese premieres of British films, including *Beast and Spiceworld* — the movie

THE TIMES FRIDAY, JANUARY 9, 1998

Balloon race bid fails to get off the ground

THE race to make the first round-the-world trip by hot air balloon remains wide open after the latest attempt by an international team in the Swiss Alps failed before it began.

The crew of the *Breitling Orbiter 2*, which includes Andy Elson, a Briton, were last night coming to terms with an aborted launch after two of the connections at one end of the capsule, which would have carried the team of three, gave way within seconds when a crane began to unload it from a truck at the launch site at Chateau d'Oex in the Swiss Alps.

The crew, Mr. Elson, Bertrand Piccard, the Swiss balloonist, and Wim Verstraeten, from Belgium — had expected near-ideal conditions for their flight. Southeasterly winds would have taken them directly towards Turkey instead of the scheduled detour to North Africa to pick up high-altitude jet stream currents.

Their became the latest in a series of expensive attempts to make the first round-the-world journey by balloon.

But the three were relieved that the connections had not snapped in mid-air after today's planned launch as it is feared the capsule would have broken away from the balloon and plummeted to earth.

The repairs will not be completed until next week and the team say it will be Wednesday before they will be ready to fly — if the weather is good. Judging by recent attempts to circumnavigate the globe, however, their chances of success appear slim.

On Monday Steve Fossett, the American millionaire, was forced to abandon his fourth attempt to balloon round the globe. He was defeated by a

Swiss Alps launch is aborted after gondola connections snap, writes

Helen Rumbelow in Chateau d'Oex

combination of low winds, malfunctioning equipment and fuel shortage, and was forced down in Russia. Mr Fossett can at least find solace in being the holder of the record for the longest uninterrupted flight by hot air balloon. An attempt by his rival, Kevin Ullessi, was even shorter-lived when a burst helium container forced him on New Year's Day to abandon his attempt in Indiana after little more than two hours.

Balloon fever has been intensifying as teams rush to launch before February, when

It could have been so much worse if the damage had happened after the launch

the fast winter jet streams are disrupted by tropical storms. In December, Richard Branson was forced to abandon his latest attempt at the record after a large gust tore his balloon free from its moorings. He plans to make another attempt later this month, from Marrakesh.

Today the Americans Dick Rutan and Dave Melton plan to take off from Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The competition between the rival teams is keen. After yesterday's disappointment,

Mr Piccard said that the fault, which will delay the launch by at least a week, was a living nightmare, but they were now even with Richard Branson's *Virgin Global Challenger*.

"After having Richard Branson lose his envelope it's a point for us to lose our gondola."

Mr Elson, a 44-year-old aeronautical engineer and balloon pilot from Wells, Somerset, said: "We have a potential season until the end of February and I would be surprised if the weather was not good at some time."

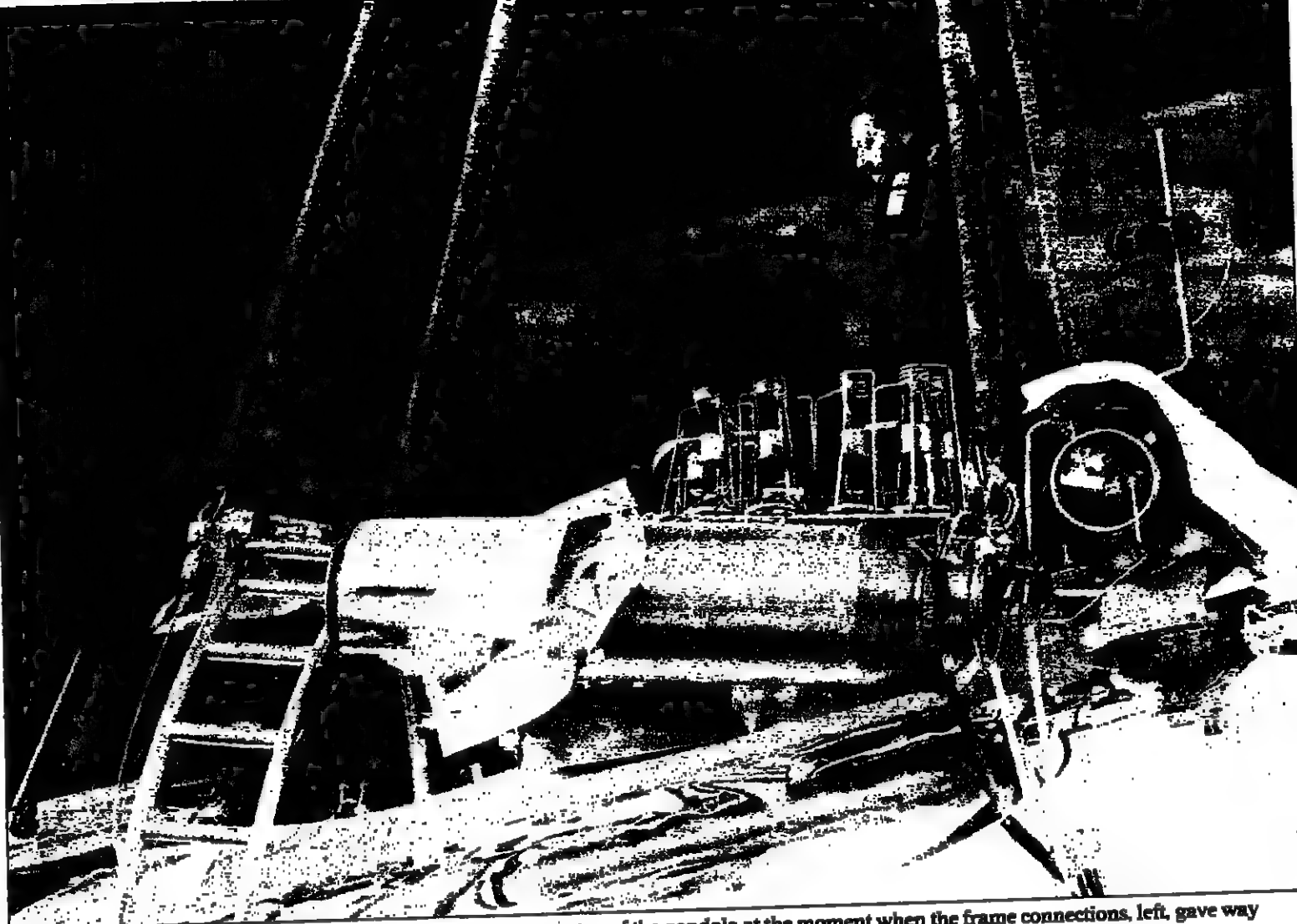
Explaining yesterday's mishap, he said: "For some reason the cable pulled out the fittings. We do not know why and we will have to investigate. We also have some repairs to make to heating pipes, which have been badly bent out of shape."

He said a Swiss company would now make some replacement bolts to fit to the side of the tiny living compartment so it could be properly connected to the balloon.

The launch director, Don Cameron, whose Bristol-based company Cameron Balloons made the balloon, struggled to hide his disappointment after the capsule dropped about eight inches and smashed on to the steel truck.

He said: "Maybe on the crane it was pulled a little bit to one side, but that should not have been a problem."

"It could have been so much worse if it had happened after the launch. We believe the



Andy Elson, the Briton in the *Breitling Orbiter 2* crew, on top of the gondola at the moment when the frame connections, left, gave way

damage to the capsule was slight. I'm sure the Civil Aviation Authority will be interested to understand that a certified part has failed in a manner which could have endangered air crew." He

refused to disclose the company involved and, when questioned about when the team might get airborne, he said that it was in the hands of the elements. "They will probably not fly on Wednesday

because the weather people say probably not," he said. Mr Elson, who started ballooning because his wife got seasick and he wanted to "sail in the sky", has already set himself a higher goal. "Once

we get the round-the-world thing out of the way, I'd like to go 80,000ft up into space where you can see the curvature of the Earth."

He is planning to do the flight solo, in an open basket,

using a space suit. He said: "Like Bertrand and Wim, I am severely disappointed." Mr Piccard said: "Today was a nightmare and I hope the dream will come true in the next few weeks."

Kohl cuts short tax debate and leaves it to voters

FROM DEBORAH COLLETT IN FRANKFURT

THE German Government has handed the monumental decision on how to reform the country's cumbersome tax system to the voters in this year's general election.

Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor, announced that there would be no further debate with the Opposition on the issues of tax and welfare changes, and challenged Germans to back his party — which had tried to push through reforms aimed at

reviving investment and cutting record postwar unemployment.

"The decision... will have to be made by the voters on September 27," said Friedrich Bohl, the Chancellor Minister. In a deliberately provocative move, which many in his Christian Democratic Union (CDU) hope will not backfire, the Chancellor is trusting that voters will have registered his constant message that inter-party talks foundered with the opposition Social Democrat (SPD) veto in the upper house. The Government's decision con-

tradicts promises by both Theo Waigel, the Finance Minister, and Wolfgang Schäuble, parliamentary leader of the CDU's coalition with its Bavarian sister party, the CSU. Both men promised before Christmas that all sides would meet for negotiations in 1998. "Now they've changed their minds, but then it was always clear that a compromise would never be reached," said Uwe Bahusen, political editor of *Die Welt*.

The 15-year-old ruling alliance will revert to a plan, drawn up over a year ago, to cut income and corpo-

rate taxes, to raise indirect taxes and scrap innumerable tax breaks. Within this project, the Government wants to slice the top rate of income tax from 53 per cent to 39 per cent, a move called irresponsible by SPD financial experts who favour a 4 per cent cut across the board. Neither proposal will be adopted in time to ease Germany's way into European economic and monetary union, which begins this spring with the selection of those countries qualified to join, based on budget deficits. While the Government appears

indifferent to the billions of pounds of taxpayers' money poured into bottomless welfare pots, it has decided to crack down on tax evaders by paying for information.

Tax evasion is costing the state hundreds of billions of pounds a year in lost income. However, at a meeting attended by ministers from all 16 German states, it was agreed that payments should not be given to known criminals, and should be made only when large sums of money are involved or a crime has been committed.



Theo Waigel right and Wolfgang Schäuble have failed to win Opposition agreement on tax reform

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Share plunge fuels gloom in Hong Kong

HONG KONG share prices, hit by a collapse of tourism and fears of avian flu, continued plunging for another day yesterday, bringing the total fall this year to 14 per cent.

Groups of worried Hong Kong citizens gazed at stock market and currency monitor screens outside banks yesterday, gossiping anxiously as, at one point, the stock market fell below 9,000. It rallied later to end at 9,254, down almost 3 per cent.

It was the big operators that were fuelling the downturn, analysts said, by selling Hong Kong dollars, American dollars are being bought by companies that, while they need US money to clear future debts, fear that the link between the two currencies established in 1983 would be broken. At the same time, the market is awash with unanswered questions: Why are

Analysts believe China is now at risk from the turmoil, writes James Pringle

foreign exchange reserves growing when they should be declining? Is China pumping money into the territory, and what happens if it stops? Why is there heavy selling of shares in mainland companies?

The answer, many believe, is that China is now being drawn into the general crisis. Some analysts think that the second phase of the Asian economic crisis is now unfolding, with markets in Singapore and Taiwan, which

largely survived the first round, also hit.

The third phase is the possible crunch in China, with its tens of millions of unemployed or underemployed. Turmoil on the mainland would have incalculable ramifications throughout the region.

Many Hong Kong people fear for their jobs in a round of blood-letting before the Chinese new year, January 29 ushers in the Year of the Tiger, which should mean prosperity, but its advent is now a mockery for the former tiger economies.

□ No entry: Hong Kong has scrapped its port-of-first-arrival policy, used by thousands of Vietnamese boatpeople. The decision will end special treatment in the territory for Vietnamese refugees. (Reuters)

Economic storm, page 25



A trader at the Hong Kong stock exchange shows his frustration yesterday as the territory's shares fell. Citizens watched prices tumble on screens outside banks

Panic buying adds to crisis in Indonesia

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT IN JAKARTA

INDONESIA reeled yesterday with financial markets plummeting for a fifth consecutive day and questions about President Suharto's political future, but the powerful military urged people to remain calm.

The stock market and the currency plunged more than 18 per cent at one point, with the rupiah quoted at 10,000 to the dollar in late trading. Last week it was quoted at under 5,000 — amid rumours that Mr Suharto might not seek a seventh term of office in the March presidential election. A government leader, who asked not to be identified, would only note that the President had not announced a decision yet.

The chaos spread from the financial markets into the streets, with witnesses reporting panic buying of food and other essentials, as people feared another round of price increases. Rumours abounded during the day, with whispers that the country might impose a moratorium on servicing its foreign debt gathering strength by the evening. There was no official indication that there was any basis to the talk.

The freefall in the markets was also fuelled by unfounded rumours that Mr Suharto was stepping down and fears that the International Monetary Fund was unhappy with how Indonesia was proceeding with promised reforms in return for a \$40 billion (£2 billion) bailout package.

One market analyst said: "There is no end to the economic crisis in sight as there is no confidence in the Indonesian Government... this means the political situation will get more and more volatile in the run-up to the March election."

There were press reports that the National Brotherhood Foundation, a loyalist nationalist group, had called on Mr Suharto not to seek re-election. It said in a statement that Mr Suharto, who is 76 and in poor health, "has dedicated his life to the country for 50 years as a soldier

and a statesman", but that for the nation's sake he should make way for fresh blood.

Social unrest is already brewing as millions of people have been laid off in the past three months. On Monday thousands of people went on the rampage in the West Java city of Bandung, smashing up hundreds of cars and shops.

Supermarkets and traditional markets in several big cities were flooded yesterday with people who fear massive price rises in the wake of the rupiah's continuing collapse.

"I don't know what to think anymore. The situation is just crazy," said Dianawati, a housewife buying two dozen bottles of cooking oil in a supermarket. "From what I read in the papers it seems the only way the country will ever recover is for President Suharto to go." In the past two

6 Social unrest is already brewing as millions of people have been laid off in the past three months

weeks, the media have become increasingly confident about printing people's demands for political reform.

"We ourselves are surprised that no one is clamping down on us," one newspaper executive said. "But until they do, we will print what is really happening here."

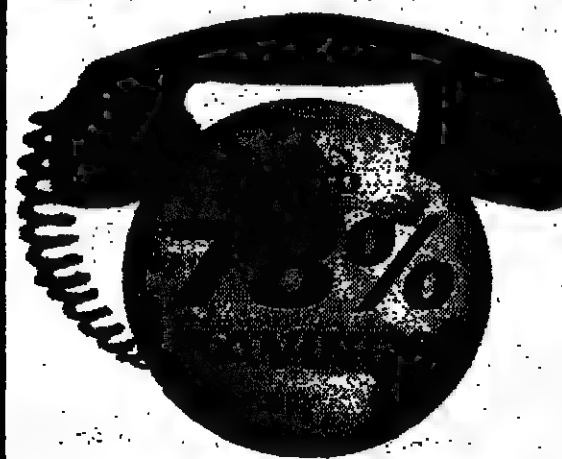
Despite the mounting tension, Mr Suharto's position is still extremely strong as he has the backing of both the armed forces and the ruling Golkar party. Should he choose to stand in March, he would be likely to romp home. "However, if the economic and social political situations deteriorate further then even people in the army and the bureaucracy might consider calling for change," a diplomat said. "If that should happen, it would be a very different story."



Suharto: under growing pressure to step down

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Firm accused of plot to boost nicotine levels

THE Justice Department has issued the first criminal charge in its three-year investigation of the tobacco industry, in a move which could encourage Congress to insert harsher penalties against cigarette companies into the huge settlement drafted last year.

Government lawyers allege that a leading tobacco company conspired with a biotechnology firm to develop a strain of tobacco with unusually high levels of nicotine in secret foreign farms. The industry has denied for years that it has tried to boost levels of nicotine in cigarettes to keep smokers addicted, one of the most controversial allegations against the companies.

The Justice Department has not named or charged the "co-conspirator" tobacco company. Government officials say that it is Brown & Williamson Tobacco, the third largest American tobacco company, and a subsidiary of the British BAT Industries.

The biotechnology company, California-based DNA Plant Technology, has agreed to plead guilty to the charge of developing tobacco with double the normal levels of nicotine in Brazil and other countries, and to co-operate with the Justice Department's wide-ranging investigation.

Congress seeks strict control on tobacco farms, Bronwen Maddox writes

Commercial growing of high-nicotine tobacco is banned in the United States.

Last year 18 Brazilian farmers admitted they were growing the leaf.

The charge against DNAP is the relatively minor misdemeanour of sending seeds abroad without a licence, breaking a law which has since been repealed. The company is expected to pay a fine of \$200,000 (\$123,000), twice the gain it made from the work.

Government officials are reported as saying: "This is the first step, and no one envisions it as the last." The move "ought to send a signal to the industry that the criminal inquiry is serious and that it is moving".

Boosting the nicotine levels in cigarettes is not illegal in itself. But the allegations, denied by the industry, are

central to many of the lawsuits brought against cigarette companies, including the actions by state attorneys-general, which form the basis of last year's settlement.

Members of Congress, who must decide whether to incorporate the settlement with new legislation, suggested yesterday that the prospect of a stream of criminal charges issuing from the Justice Department could strengthen the hand of those who feel the deal was too generous to Big Tobacco.

Under the deal, a group of America's largest tobacco companies agreed to pay \$368.5 billion over 25 years in return for immunity against actions brought by state health authorities to reclaim the cost of treating diseases which appeared to stem from smoking. While Congress mulls over whether to implement the landmark settlement, some states are pursuing unilateral actions against the industry.

The threat of criminal charges may increase the pressure on tobacco companies to settle the state actions. Martin Meckan, a Democratic Congressman, argues that, if more charges follow, the industry may be pressed to make even greater concessions.



Zeeshan, left, and Arshad, two of the 13 children returning home to Pakistan after a year in a Saudi jail

Saudis release child prisoners

FROM ZAHID HUSAIN IN KARACHI

A NIGHTMARE ended yesterday for 13 Pakistani children who returned home from Saudi Arabia after a year, where they had been in prison with their parents on drug-smuggling charges.

Tired and hungry, the children stumbled off a Pakistan International Airline flight that had been delayed for more than 24 hours in Saudi Arabia. The

children were granted amnesty after government talks between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, but their parents face the death penalty if convicted.

The freedom from a harsh Saudi jail might have brought an end to the ordeal of the rest of the children, but not to Shahnaz Ahmed, five. While her mother faces trial in Saudi Arabia, her father, grandmother and several other close relatives are in Pakistani jails on drug charges and there was no one to meet her

at the airport. Shahnaz was temporarily lodged in an orphanage until arrangements are made to move her to live with her grandmother in jail.

Seven of the children, who are aged between three and 15, will stay with their relatives in Lahore while five others were sent to their villages in other parts of Punjab and Northwest Frontier Province. They and their parents were accused of carrying heroin packed in rubber bags in their stomachs.

Experts dismiss call for UN standby force

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT



Carrington: demand for well-planned operations

THE United Nations was urged yesterday to develop a tougher enforcement regime to ensure that all Security Council resolutions are implemented and respected.

The challenge facing the UN into the 21st century, said a report by a group of foreign policy experts headed by Lord Carrington, the former Foreign Secretary, was not to intervene in more conflicts but to make sure that, when it did take economic or military action, it was prepared to mount a well-planned operation.

However, Lord Carrington dismissed the proposal yesterday by Lord Owen, the former Labour Foreign Secretary, in another report on conflict prevention, that the UN should have its own rapid deployment force on permanent standby. Lord Carrington said it was impractical and involved inherent risks.

After publication yesterday of a report by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, Lord Owen said it was essential that the UN should have a standby

force. A similar proposal was made some years ago by Boutros Boutros Ghali, the former UN Secretary-General, but received no support from key Security Council members.

Lord Carrington, head of an international task force on the enforcement of Security Council resolutions which produced recommendations in a report yesterday, said there would not be sufficient backing for a standby force.

He and his task force members said that any permanent

UN rapid deployment force would have to be relatively small and could not possibly be equipped for every type of conflict.

In its report, *Words to Deeds: Strengthening the UN's Enforcement Capabilities*, Lord Carrington's task force said the UN Secretary-General needed better-informed analysts to prepare for intervention operations. "It's the enforcement machinery that needs to be improved and also far better intelligence is required," he said.

Dog lovers baying for neutered Buddy

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

THE emergence of Buddy as America's latest icon gathered pace yesterday as animal rights experts urged President Clinton to set an example by neutering his dog.

They are pressing the White House to emaculate the five-month-old puppy next month on Spay Day USA, a national event sponsored by the Doris Day Animal League.

Jacque Schultz, a director at the American Society for the

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said sterilisation improved a pet's health and helped to control the vast population of unwanted animals. "The President has a home that is a national treasure and as the dog matures he is more apt to lift his leg and mark all the things the taxpayers have paid for if he is not neutered."

Mike McCurry, the White House press secretary, backed away from his earlier insistence that there was no chance of Buddy being neutered.

Botha marathon

Johannesburg: Hearings in the case against P. W. Botha, the former South African President accused of defying the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, could last two years, lawyers predicted.

Family shackles

Bangkok: Police said they had rescued a woman chained to a pole for 13 years by her parents. According to police, the parents believed their daughter, 43, had been driven insane by black magic. (AP)

Fearful Kaunda

Lusaka: Kenneth Kaunda, 73, the former Zambian President under house arrest here, told a court that he feared for his safety after a number of apparent attempts on his life. (Reuters)

Steady progress

Ankara: Parents' evenings at Sairilar village school in Turkey are fairly simple. Thirty-five of the 70 pupils have the same father, clan chief Ziya Yasar. He has 51 children by three wives. (Reuters)

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Yousef branded "apostle of evil"

Life for US bomb plotter

Washington: Ramzi Yousef, convicted of masterminding the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centre and plotting to destroy a dozen American passenger jets, was described as an "apostle of evil" by a judge yesterday (Tom Rhodes writes). He sentenced Yousef, 29, to life in prison. The judge, in what amounted to effective solitary confinement for life, said he should be quarantined from the rest of the world, visited only by his family.

CIA says Saddam won showdown

THE CIA has concluded that President Saddam Hussein won the latest standoff over United Nations weapons inspections and that Syria is seeking to forge an anti-American alliance with Iraq, according to reports in Washington yesterday.

The intelligence agency added that the Iraqi leader would continue to "flout" UN demands if Washington failed to exert a harsher response to his actions.

In a separate report sent to American policymakers this week, the CIA said that Syria, a traditional enemy of Baghdad, had made overtures to Iraq for an alliance that would include the deployment of Syrian troops should a ground war erupt again in the Gulf.

The agency apparently has not liked either the UN or President Clinton's dovish approach in gaining access by weapons inspectors to Saddam's presidential palaces. In a report leaked to *The Washington Times* yesterday, the CIA said that Saddam had been frustrated only with the

Intelligence chiefs are now alerting Washington to Syrian moves for an

Iraqi alliance, Tom Rhodes reports

pace of sanctions relief itself.

"Saddam has benefited from the UN Security Council's reluctance to approve the use of military force or to impose significant new sanctions when Baghdad obstructs the UN Special Commission mission," said the report.

"If Saddam perceives he is gaining momentum in the Security Council — his insistence on banning inspectors from 'presidential' sites has so far drawn only mild rebuke — he would likely continue flouting UN resolutions."

The report went on to cite the Russian-led effort in the Security Council as a diplomatic coup for Saddam and one that had resulted in Moscow drafting several pro-Iraq resolutions to introduce at the UN in coming weeks. One, it is said, would declare Iraq to

be in compliance with UN resolutions concerning the elimination of nuclear-weapons related goods. But the agency noted that Russian efforts to back Baghdad had been "complicated" by the blocking of UN access to the palaces. American officials have said that the US will veto all pro-Iraq resolutions tabled by the Russians in New York.

The special analysis of Iraq concluded that Saddam's regime "appears stable" despite seven years of economic sanctions, but that divisions within his family presented the greatest potential for sparking a security threat. Last year's assassination attempt against Uday, one of Saddam's sons, had provoked no serious threat to the regime and, despite occasional attacks from Shia insurgents to the

south and Kurdish separatists to the north, Iraq's security forces remained effective.

The second report appeared to signal that Syria, long a key Middle East player and ally of Iran, has switched sides. A visit in November to Damascus by Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, "was the result of extensive Syrian efforts to initiate a rapprochement," the report said. The Syrians had proposed the unifying of their ruling Baath political parties, and joint action to remove Turkish forces from northern Iraq.

Jerusalem: Israel defied US peace efforts yesterday by giving the go-ahead for more than 600 extra homes for Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank and pledging to restart building work soon at Har Homa, a settlement for 32,000 Jews.

Tatyana Suskin, 26, who put up posters in Hebron depicting the Prophet Muhammad as a pig, sparking riots throughout the Islamic world, was jailed for two years by an Israeli court yesterday.



A photograph taken by the Hubble Space Telescope in October and just released showing the first image of Saturn's ultraviolet aurora. The ringed planet is 810 million miles from Earth, and the phenomenon can only be seen from space

Khatami calls for links with America at grassroots only

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON AND MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

CLINTON Administration officials yesterday said they were disappointed that President Khatami of Iran did not call for political contact with the American Government during an interview in which he urged closer cultural links between the two countries.

"We welcome the fact that he wants a dialogue with the American people," the State Department said. "But we continue to believe that the way to address the issues between us is for the two Governments to talk directly."

That omission was probably due to a compromise between Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's hardline religious leader, and the reform-minded Mr Khatami, who is determined to steer Iran out of its isolation. He has already improved relations with key pro-American Gulf Arab states.

Khamenei could have prevented the CNN interview taking place, but he has approved this sort of unofficial dialogue, said an Iranian diplomat in one European capital. Publicly, Ayatollah Khamenei has sharply rejected suggestions of a possible rapprochement with the US.

At the risk of disappointing Washington, Mr Khatami

was anxious to move slowly rather than do anything that would encourage his hardline opponents to hamper his efforts, diplomats said. "His position is a consensus position of the Iranian Government as a whole," said a senior Western envoy in Tehran.

Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, has also called for direct government-to-government talks — which would mark the first diplomatic contact since Islamic clerics overthrew the previous Iranian Government in 1979.

The Administration's latest comments came after a startling television broadcast on Wednesday night when Mr Khatami, interviewed in Tehran by CNN, shattered 18 years of continuous hostility by offering an olive branch — to the American people. A recording of the interview was shown to Iranians yesterday.

Mr Khatami called for widespread unofficial contacts through tourism, journalism, and exchanges of academics to break down the "bulky wall of mistrust". He told Americans that their leaders should apologise to them for a "foreign policy that had fostered distrust of the US across the developing world."

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Sit on your wallet...

There used to be a jolly picture, published annually around this time of year, of a brace of posh ladies braining each other with an item of Spode in the China sale at a Top People's Store. But recently this picture, and the covetous energy that it represented, seems to have been replaced with something rather more restrained. The headlines, it is true, spoke of a sales jamboree: Oxford Street stores, it was said, were even considering imposing a spending limit on customers.

Then why, I wondered, when I embarked rather nervously on a little recon to the West End, were all the fashion departments so quiet? Perhaps everyone else was mixing it down in White Goods. Then again, perhaps people have been so depressed by the Guidelines on how not to pick up a Fashion Disaster at the sales which have been appearing in the papers that they have lost the will to shop.

Some of the recent advice from fashion pundits on how to be a successful sales shopper might have struck Oliver Cromwell and his Levellers as a shade on the dour side. Don't buy high fashion — it will date; don't spend more than you can afford; don't buy anything in the hope that you may slim into it; don't be seduced by designer labels. Sick, in short, to classic

neutrals of unobtrusive cut. A pox on all of that, I say. Of course, one doesn't want to end up like the poor lady I saw being escorted, glittering-eyed and babbling, from the fashion floor at Liberty by her husband. "It is time to go home now," he was saying, quite kindly, but with his hand firmly in the small of her back. Nor does one want to join the sheeplike throng that I saw outside Gucci on my way to the hairdressers. "That is soooo sad," said Andre, the hairdresser, when I told him about it. "And," he added, with a dismissive roll of the eyes, "what will they buy when they get inside? Last season's modes, that's what."

Well, there is no getting away from last season's modes if you go to the sales. But buy intelligently, and you will illuminate your look for many seasons to come. In any case, the point, and the joy, of sales shopping (it ought to be an exciting quest, not a penitential pilgrimage) is to bag something truly stupendous — the sort of thing that makes

your colleagues drop their biscuits into their coffee and go "Where did you get that?" Useful and desirable though classics may be, they are not the stuff of bargains. They sell steadily, so there is no incentive to slash the price. Besides, where is the thrill in snapping up yet another pair of black trousers? Sales are for chance: upon the luxurious little thing that you could never afford in the ordinary way but that lifts your look on to a higher stylistic plane.

A good rule, when hunting, is to be guided by love. If you buy a garment because you can't live without it, then you will mind a great deal less if, in the next month's *Vogue*, you find it on a list of things to throw out this second. Love is also a valuable insurance policy against the disapproval of your husband/best friend/child. "Horrible," said my friend Henry, when I showed him the ravishing pair of gold reptile-print velvet trousers I'd just bought at Caroline Charles. *prêt à ch...*

"Don't be silly," I said, "you just haven't quite got the point of them yet..." So, how to tell the desirable from the disastrous? Get your eye in, is the first rule. Make a mental note at the beginning of the season of what you would like, if only you could afford it. A couple of months later, you probably will be able to afford it.

Think about quality, and aim high. What is the point of buying cut-price angora when you can probably find cashmere for the same money? For this reason, I don't bother much with the high street, where bargains can be had all year round. The only exception is where a chain has had an outstanding season — Warehouse's sculpted silver satin party dress, red velvet cocktail bag, Tocca-esque embroidered grey chiffon and long hooded wool robe are dazzling designs at minute prices; Laura Ashley, despite talk of a loss of design direction, has silk velvet in wonderful, rich colours — tawny orange and Nattier blue, much reduced.

The last great rule is, sit on your wallet. Some of the very best sales — Amanda Wakeley, Catherine Walker, Mazono Blabnik, have only just begun. If you went out on December 27, and blew your dress allowance for the next six months, you may be very, very sorry.

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THE SUNDAY TIMES



Why Mary Queen of Scots is this year's hottest fashion inspiration
Style, on Sunday

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Do you get the drift?

ANYONE who has been foolish enough to emulate Tara Palmer-Tomkinson knows that wearing a caftan on the slopes is a recipe for pneumonia. This winter the American pistes provide a warmer, but stylistically cooler inspiration with loose zippered ski-pants and sleek padded jackets. One of the big names over there, O'Neill, has now opened a store in Neal Street, Covent Garden, selling the Boardcore and Boardbabe labels, for men and women respectively, as well as the surf line. Bestsellers include the "drift pants" — straight-legged trousers with zips at the ankles, and, in some styles, zips at the knee where padding can be inserted. The knees are also covered in a specially toughened fabric. Inquiries: 0191-419 1777

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'I would love to have had children with Helen'



It took film director Taylor Hackford 14 years to lure Helen Mirren down the aisle. Interview by Moira Petty

For one so implacably opposed to marriage, the actress Helen Mirren broke her vow to remain "sensibly" single with a remarkably romantic ceremony on New Year's Eve.

In a gold Cossack-style outfit, Miss Mirren, 51, married her long-term partner, the Hollywood film director Taylor Hackford, in a candlelit Scottish Highland church, followed by a reception at Castle Stuart.

Given the publicity that attends Miss Mirren's every move, it is perhaps not surprising that Mr Hackford failed to mention his wedding plans when he gave an interview just before Christmas.

He referred to Miss Mirren, with whom he has had a 14-year relationship, as "my wife" and said: "I've told her that any time she wants to get married, the offer is there on the table."

Asked if he thought he would be able to persuade her to formalise the union, he said, teasingly: "Maybe not... or maybe. In any case, she's the person for me for life."

Although he wore a kilt for the wedding, which coincided with his 53rd birthday, he was dressed in a dapper grey suit and highly polished shoes when we met in London. But the white beard signals the nonconformity of a man who later declared that he makes "working-class films" within the Hollywood system.

He is a lofty figure but maintains a calm presence. While he has fathered two sons from his previous mar-

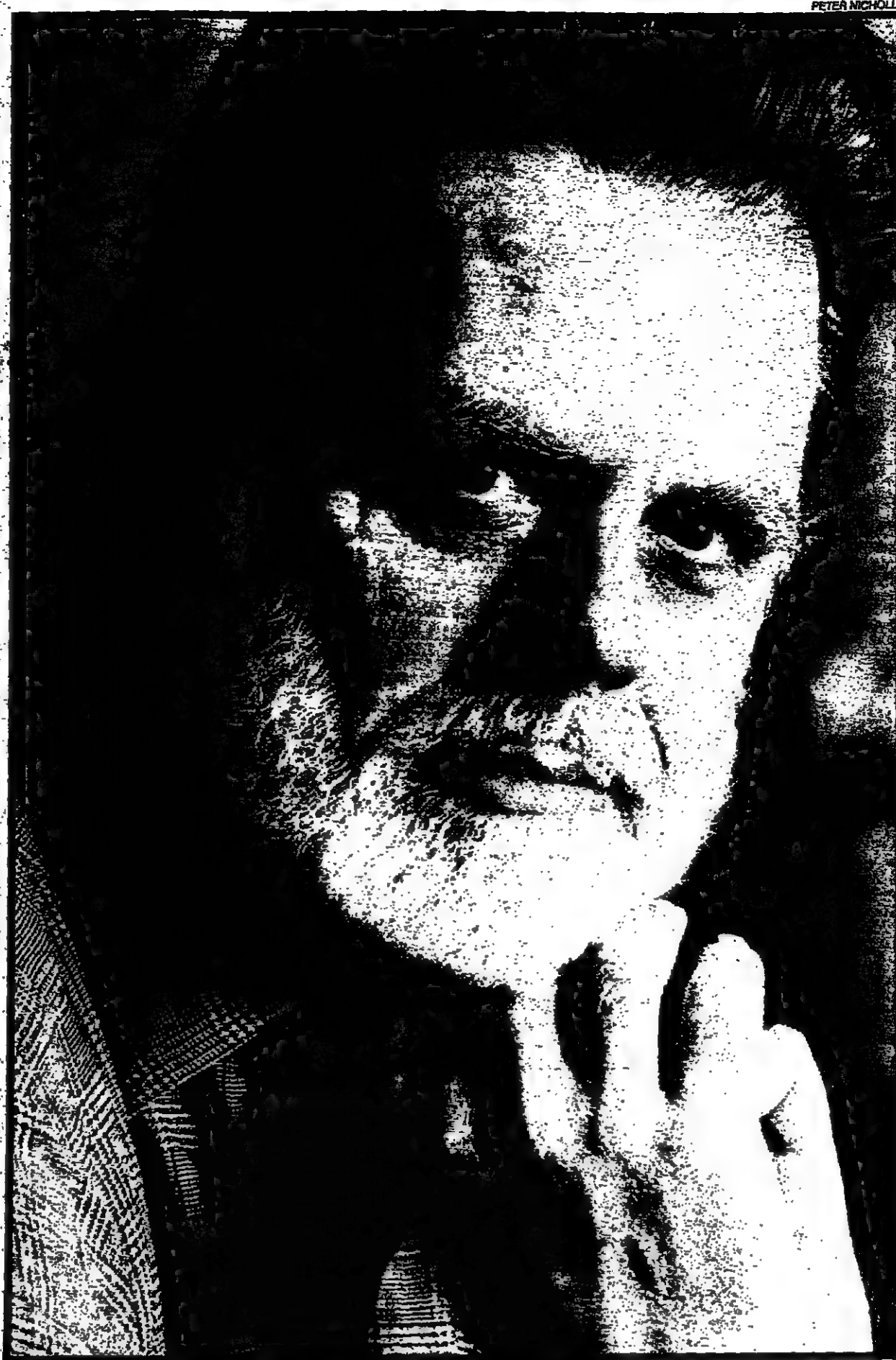
riages, his bright blue eyes cloud over when I ask if he would have liked to have had children with Miss Mirren.

"She would have made the best mother, a truly great one," he says sadly. "I would have loved to have seen her as a mother. We would have had children if she had wanted to. The decision had to be hers. But we have a very interesting life and my children have had the experience of knowing and loving her."

They met in 1984 when Miss Mirren auditioned for a role in his film, *White Nights*. Mr Hackford returned 25 minutes late from lunch with the ballet dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov, who was also in the film. "I apologised but there was a cold disinfectant from her. I tried to make small talk and she said, 'Are we going to read?' She was smoking, man! Then she asked if there was anything else, and boom, she was out of there."

Mr Hackford's favourite description for Miss Mirren, apart from "wife", is "the greatest actress in the world". He says: "What turns me on most is talent. I was definitely smitten by her. She's fabulous to work with, very smart and intuitive. You can feel the pain and ambition of characters like Jane Tennison of *Prime Suspect* through her eyes. I can read her in our private life as well. There can be complications when you get to read somebody that well."

"What is special about her is that she is not a narcissistic actress. She has a professional ego but is totally real. In terms



Hackford says his wife is the world's best actress: "What turns me on most is talent. I was most definitely smitten by her"

of the woman behind the actress, there's no question that she's a very exciting person and has a sensuality that is palpable. It's easy to talk about someone from the exterior but you reach other depths when you have been together this long."

Miss Mirren has often spoken frankly about her love life. Mr Hackford, smiling boyishly, says: "I love her candour. I have the most love and trust for her. If she spoke in a wildly destructive way, I wouldn't hesitate to speak up. She is always very true to herself."

Nor is he abashed by her many nude film roles. "I don't find it difficult that she is in sexy scenes. They're not the easiest things to do but it's crucial to get performances that are real on the screen. I ask actors to step up to these kind of situations, so it would be unrealistic not to expect others to ask this of Helen."

"They have not worked together since *White Nights* in the mid-Eighties. Mr Hackford is scathing of what he calls "the sexist tyranny" of Hollywood. "For women in Hollywood, their star rises at 18 and sets at 35, while for men it is from their mid-thirties to late fifties."

"Helen's a woman of a certain age and they're not going to build films around her. She has sense of her own worth and she is responsible for her own fate in Hollywood."

"If, when she was in her early twenties, she had wanted to go and be a sexy bombshell, she could have done so but she chose to go off and work in the theatre with director Peter Brook."

Mr Hackford made his name with the low-budget hit film *Officer and a Gentleman*, starring Richard Gere, in the early Eighties. Subsequent films have included *La Bamba*, *Against All Odds*, *When I Fall in Love* and *Dolores Claiborne*.

His latest picture, *The Devil's Advocate*, starring Keanu Reeves and Al Pacino, is a Faustian tale of greed, temptation and sin within a secular society. While wrapped in an entertaining format, the film has a strong political agenda.

"I think money has very little conscience. We live in a system in which the rewards are clear. It is becoming more and more a world of the rich and the poor."

Raised in Santa Barbara by his mother who worked long hours to support him after his father left home, he has never forgotten the struggles of those early years. "My parents divorced when I was a few months old. I spent a couple of summers with my father but hardly saw him again."

"My mother had no financial support and it was very hard for her, but she was a very strong individual. I certainly would not paint her as a tragic figure, despite what happened. When I was eight, my brother, who was 15 years older, was electrocuted in an accident at work."

"Having gone through that, a year later she became ill with breast cancer. At that young age, I questioned whether my mother was going to live but she did. It was a traumatic experience for me but it was one that led to maturity."

The original script of *The Devil's Advocate* had "passed through the ranks of Hollywood stardom" before Mr Hackford spotted its potential, recruiting Dolores Claiborne writer Tony Gilroy to revamp it. The devil figure, a warped but successful lawyer played by Al Pacino, was conceived as "a Nietzschean devil" rather than the Devil of Christianity. The film argues the importance of free will and taking responsibility for our lives.

"I see it as a cautionary tale for the millennium. This devil is inside you. He presents you with the thing you want most."

Evil can be funny and seductive.

"I had a nightmare fight with Warner Bros. I told them that they had tried to produce the film their way, now they should try it my way. You have to be fairly crafty as a filmmaker. Hollywood is full of exploitation movies with a lot of sex and monsters and no ideas."

Al Pacino had turned down the original script five times before Mr Hackford's version reached him. "He's an artist and the best American actor," he declares.

"Too often film stars become famous because they have a certain talent and they are rewarded with high salaries, pampering and adulation. They won't risk changing. They are in a state of arrested development. Al risks artistic suicide, unlike most of the actors of his generation."

"He's this little guy from the street, incredibly smart, a self-made man. He thinks this is one of his best performances but Hollywood won't recognise it in the same way."

Mr Hackford criticises the technical expertise of many film actors: "America has a lot of numblers." It was also hard to cast the Keanu Reeves role of a young lawyer hired by Pacino's devil figure. "He had to be an articulate professional. In the Thirties, Forties and Fifties there would have been ten top-name actors for that kind of a role. Keanu looked me in the eye and said he would make the commitment and I put him through mental and physical exercises in preparation."

I just want to paint my toenails

Even superwomen need high heel days, says Rachel Morris

Don't tell anyone, but some of my friends are suffering from gender depression. Take Cleo, who has two children under ten and a fancy job in the Civil Service. She rang me the other day and after describing her hectic working schedule, she sighed and said: "Oh Lord, it's all very confusing for the children. They seem to have a man for a mother."

Or consider Moira, whose husband left her with three children, the youngest not yet a year old. These days Moira earns a living, brings up the children, changes all the lightbulbs and puts out the rubbish. Moira is doing fine — brilliantly, in fact — but she is still wondering anxiously if one day she will simply turn into a man.

It is not hard to see why we are depressed. In the Fifties — or so I am told — all women were expected to dwell at the "girly" end of that scale which runs from extreme femininity to extreme masculinity, whereas nowadays you can put yourself where you like. Or so the theory goes.

In practice, the need to earn money and pay bills and take responsibility means that most of us do not have time for the languid, toenail-painting kind of femininity which was around in our mothers' days. And while it is one thing to give up all that by choice, it is quite another to have it taken away by the demands of work. And when I say "work", I mean oodles of it — children, careers, the house — three jobs rolled into one. No wonder we are all suffering from burnout.

Hence my girlfriends and I have been indulging in nostalgia sessions — held in an atmosphere of secrecy and guilt — in which we speculate on what life must have been like when the greatest demand upon a woman was to keep her husband happy. We are keeping our sessions secret because we do not want the men to know that the smallest iota of doubt has entered our minds. And of course we are feeling guilty, because we know there is no ingratiate like that of the children of revolutionaries. To think of the struggles our mothers went through, and now all we want to do is paint our toenails.

We have tried all the usual methods of resolving

our internal gender conflicts — such as spending large amounts of money on expensive clothes and make-up — but we have always felt that something else was needed. And then at our last session, while watching *North by Northwest* starring Cary Grant (which may have been the problem — it is a terribly sexy film), we came up with the idea of traditional gender days. On these days — to be held perhaps once a month — we would give up all the power which comes from earning money. We would forgo all opinions and argumentative behaviour, and instead would iron the shirts, sort the socks and cook the meals. In return our men



would earn enough money to ensure that we could spend a large chunk of that day drifting from hairdresser to beauty salon to shopping mall in high heels.

I have not put the idea to the men yet, but I think they will jump at it. In fact, I suspect them of holding nostalgia sessions in the pub on Friday nights already. Because now that extreme femininity, like extreme masculinity, has gone out of fashion, they too are having to muddle along in the middle of the scale. (In our household it is only the children who can afford to luxuriate in outrageous femininity, painting their lips and toenails with abandon.)

Meanwhile I can see only one problem with our traditional gender days. This is that all the beauty salons in the world would not make us willing to relinquish our power for more than 24 hours, whereas the men might acquire a taste for this system and be unwilling to give it up when the day was over. In which case I might be ironing shirts and sorting socks for ever, and that is not such a smart idea.

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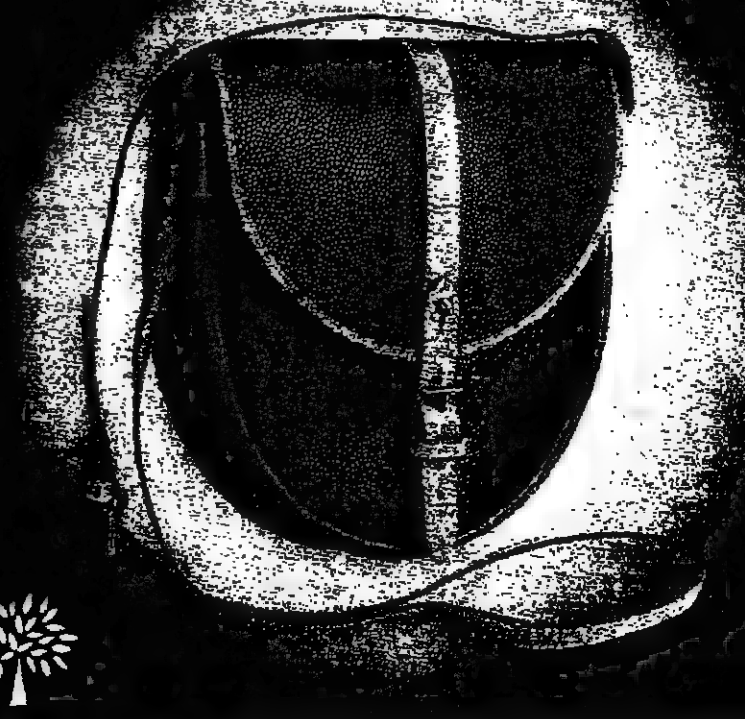
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CHANEL
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Trimble's way out of the Maze

John Lloyd says a revengers' tragedy can yet be avoided

A plan is being finalised which represents the Northern Irish Unionists' best shot at a settlement to Ulster's 30-year crisis. It will be unveiled soon, at least in principle. It, or something close to it, should be taken, locked in and implemented.

We have had, over the season of goodwill, a bloody glimpse of the revenge tragedy waiting to swallow up the Province once more. It has caused Mo Mowlam, the Secretary of State, to enter the Maze today to talk to the chilling men who run the loyalist gangs within that unique penitentiary. Perhaps her charm, chutzpah and courage (none of which were in doubt) will persuade them to appear at the talks due to resume on Monday, which their leaders, for the most part, wish to attend. But her qualities, which have probably assisted the process to continue, will not be enough to bring it to a conclusion. For that, one of the famous hard choices has to be made — and soon.

David Trimble, the Official Unionists' leader, has spent much of the talks refining a settlement proposal which he is ready to present. He has done little — a mistake on his part — to make it acceptable to, or even clear to, the Social Democratic Labour Party, the main, and constitutional, nationalist grouping. But he has signalled its outlines in talks with the Prime Minister, with whom he remains on trusting terms (terms he does not enjoy with Dr Mowlam). He thinks he can sell it to the vast majority of Northern Irish Unionists.

Its centrepiece is a Northern Irish assembly elected by proportional representation. Its committees would be appointed on a proportional basis — thus bringing the minority parties into the responsibility and rights of governance. Any cross-border institution would be linked to the assembly, but would be decided after the assembly convened, by the determination of the heads of the committees and the assembly's first minister.

There would also be a "council of the islands" (Dublin vetoed "British Isles") that would bring together ministers of both sovereign Governments, ministers of the regional assemblies in Scotland, Ulster and Wales, and members of all of the parties and assemblies. The council would have no executive, but (if successful) a good deal of indirect authority.

The plan offers a great shift in Unionist position from that which existed when direct rule was introduced a quarter of a century ago. Then, nearly all Unionists were majoritarians, seeing in their domination of a local parliament the guarantee of continued Union; they were also dismissive of Irish involvement in their affairs, seeing it as the start of an engulfing green tide. Now, the leader of the main Unionist party is offering a share of power, all-Union institutions and an all-Ireland forum.

But for the Irish, for the SDLP, the IRA and its Sinn

Fein political wing, the devil is in the principle. Mr Trimble's principle is maintenance of the Union and integrity of the State. He knows that the Unionists want peace; he also knows that they want the Union, and has been reminding that a significant fringe will kill if they feel it is threatened. They could be brought to accept what he is about to propose, though it is, in his view, close to the limit.

Three men are critical to the success of his venture, but none is a natural ally of Mr Trimble. Tony Blair must see it as a settlement whose main points he can commend and defend, if it becomes subject to terrorism. The Prime Minister won Mr Trimble's trust when he gave a speech last May dismissing the possibility of a united Ireland for three or four generations; the Unionist leader believes Mr Blair may be prepared to put his authority behind it, and bring his Northern Ireland Secretary into line if she demurs.

Bertie Ahern, the Taoiseach, must also be convinced it is the best he is likely to see the Unionists accept, and be prepared to press it on the Northern nationalists. Mr Blair has refused to be "a persuader" of the Unionists for a united Ireland; Mr Ahern must be prepared to persuade the nationalists that they must live with a separate statehood for the foreseeable future and beyond. He is leader of the more nationalist of the two parties, Fianna Fail, but he is also non-ideological, the head of a booming economy, and pressed as much by his electors to have done with the Troubles as by nationalists who want the old score kept open.

A flawed settlement is emerging based on a Union

There is, at least, John Hume. The SDLP leader has built his strategy in the 1990s on having Sinn Féin accepted as interlocutors by the British Government; although it has betrayed him by breaking ceasefire, and outflanked him by taking votes from his party, he has stuck with his view. But Sinn Féin and he had to face the Unionists' bottom line. If he can be convinced that this is it, can he also be convinced — in the name of a lasting peace — to speak for it?

These are very large questions — especially the last, to Mr Hume. But they must be put soon, if the situation is not to slide once more towards multiple murder. Huge concessions have been made and are still being made to terrorists; they cannot be justified, except on the basis that the talking is expected to produce settlement. One is now emerging: it is based on the only possible grounds, the continuation of a Union to which all the democratic actors assent, even if they do not like it. It will be frail, contended, denounced. It needs the authority of the British Government to preserve it. A hard choice, but the only one.

The author is associate editor of the New Statesman.



It's good to be needed

We in the West no longer know just how helpless a child may be — nor the true nobility of devoted parenthood

To those who travel by bus and train in the Third World, something in the poignancy of the image I try to recapture below will be familiar. I was on a small bus going from Piscac to Cuzco in Peru. The road takes a high pass over the mountains, and at sundown — it was sundown — the air freezes quite suddenly.

Some passengers slept, others stared out of the window, huddling blankets around them. The man and woman in front of me, of mixed Indian and Spanish blood, tended their little girl.

She was perhaps nine, and a Down's syndrome child. Her face was slightly puffy. On one of her hands was a bad burn — perhaps she had fallen in the kitchen fire, or tried to pick up something hot. But she was much loved. This girl was very clean and neat, dressed all in ruffles and bows, though threadbare ruffles and bows. Her straight black hair had been tied with a green ribbon and her little shoes elaborately laced. From time to time her father patted her, as if reassuringly.

He and his wife were obviously very poor. Their clothes were respectable but shabby and their string basket held only a few basic provisions and a frayed blanket. The mother, perhaps forty, dozed off; her husband, awake, took charge of their daughter.

The girl seemed confused as to where she was and jerked her head from side to side, whispering sometimes. When she did this the man, who looked younger than his wife, cradled the child, folding his arm securely around her and rocking her. This comforted and calmed her. In contrast with the unfamiliar interior of the bus, full of strange people, she knew and trusted him. He was thin and his face careworn. He looked tired.

After a while the little girl ceased her distracted movements and began to sleep. With both wife and daughter asleep, the man glanced apologetically at the passengers around him, and at me. "My daughter," he said. Then, folding his arms again around the sleeping child, he smiled at me with an expression of infinite tenderness. His smile had a sort of rapture.

A familiar scene, in its essentials. You may remark that one does not need to go to South America to find examples of parental love, of the strong protecting the weak, or of people to whom fate has dealt a difficult hand, doing their best.

But what touched my feelings was a sense of how completely alone in the world this man and his wife were. They were like a small boat on a wide and treacherous sea. They may have had family and friends, but there will have been absolutely nothing to fall back on materially and nobody, nobody else upon whom they could devolve care of their child — nobody even to share the load with. There will have been no state provision or special benefit, no local authority "carer" to help with their daughter, no institution except of the most pitiful kind in which they could place her — and certainly no homework clubs. That a child like theirs would otherwise have been doomed I saw, in another town, Puno, where a pathetic, rat-like retarded boy was placed on display on the pavement with a sign beside him (I translate: "To the public: The Overseer of Minors places at your disposition a boy, certifying of the same, that he was abandoned by his family at the age of four, lived in different households and places, and was taken away by the authorities and brought to this town. The Overseer has nothing to do with the child's future. He is a travelling companion on that bus from Piscac were all that separated their little girl from such a fate, and they knew it.

It would be possible at this point in my essay to take the route you might anticipate. I could make a plea for the vulnerable and the weak in poor countries. I could describe the admirable work done by voluntary agencies established to help street children, orphans, the sick and the retarded in South America. Such work is commendable. But the focus of my interest on that bus was not the little girl at all — she was fine, if unheeding — but her parents. Her father struck me as having attained a nobility, a happiness, a state of grace which it would be hard to surpass. It was transcendental. It was almost ecstatic. But this is not a

homily on the virtuous poor. The couple's poverty was immaterial. Wealthier or poorer parents could have experienced the same rapture. To add to this: couples' monthly income would have contributed nothing to the joyfulness of the father's smile, nor diminished it either.

His rapture had a simple cause. Somebody, some living creature, depended utterly upon him.

There is perhaps no pleasure to equal the knowledge that you are everything to somebody. To know that not just emotionally but in the very necessities of life itself, you hold some fellow-creature's wellbeing in your hands is the deepest sense exhilarating. You are their shelter and their floor; their door into the world and their wall against it. Without you they would perish. In no way is it necessary that they know or appreciate this. For your pleasure to be complete it is better they do not. To be trusted without question, taken for granted and hardly noticed, is sublime. I seem (I hope) a steady driver and enjoy driving by night. A car on the motorway in the dark is a small and vulnerable pod and driving is one of the diminishing number of dangerous things we are still allowed to do in modern Britain. There have been occasions when, glancing at the seat beside me and into the rear-view mirror, I have realised that all my passengers were asleep, and felt enormously moved. It is such an accolade to be leant on as we lean against a tree, without acknowledging the tree.

Social and welfare policy is usually seen in terms of its clients: the disabled, the weak, children and the elderly. These are more or less dependent and we are forever discussing their needs — palpable needs, quantifiable. But a need we seldom discuss is the need to be depended upon. This is speculative and intangible; impossible to quantify.

I am coming to believe, however, that it is important for the normal

adult. We see its stirrings in the child. How noticeable is the child's wish to "help" — to be needed! How intensely absorbed is the small girl in the imagined needs of her dolls. How strong is the instinct of children to own pets. Denied real pets they crave computer pets instead, projecting upon inanimate circuitry a frustrated instinct to nurture something living.

I wonder whether the growth in pet-ownership in developed countries during this century can be explained partly by the expansion of the welfare state? These days, the only fellow-creature enjoying a relationship of total dependence upon an Englishman or Englishwoman is likely to be a small rodent, cat, goldfish, poodle or budgerigar. No wonder sad people feed pigeons in the park. A hundred years ago an individual's hunger to protect and sponsor would have been satisfied by the responsibilities husbands and wives bore towards each other, parents towards their children, and, in their own parents' old age, towards their elders.

Life was full of dependence. Is the young man you might meet in a British shopping precinct, out buying Christmas videos with his family, conscious of dependence upon him in that full sense of the term? When, once, I spent time in Newcastle with unemployed families, I found the suffering of the breadwinners profound: profound not because life as their families had known it ended when their job ended — but because it had not. Dependence upon Dad had been replaced by dependence on the State. Dad was truly redundant.

When a safety net is placed by the State under the life you hold in your hands, the instinct to protect is frustrated. You cannot feel depended upon when, in the ultimate, you are not. The Christian Socialist dream is thus haunted by a huge internal contradiction.

In how many areas of modern life in Britain does a citizen face the likelihood that another would go hungry, or cold, or die without him? Seldom, we hope. The State should meet need where no other help is forthcoming. But in meeting need, it denies its citizens satisfaction of a subtler need, much harder to articulate or lobby for: the need to be needed. The conflict is insoluble. Few children in Britain will know quite the degradation of that retarded boy on the pavement in Puno; and only a few fathers will ever know the joy of the little girl's father, on the bus from Piscac.

Philip Howard



What's in a toponym? A sincere form of flattery

Mecca is a good name for a bingo hall, except for the most paranoid of Muslims. Muslim community leaders are misguided to object to the name. Muhammad's birthplace, where all good Muslims hope to go on their hajj some day, has had strong human magnetic qualities for 14 centuries. So in English and other languages it has become a toponym (a place name that because of its glamour has become a common noun) for a place that people long to visit, the birthplace of a faith, a cult or a policy. "Lord's," cliché-mongers are apt to say, "is the Mecca of cricket."

Thus to describe a bingo hall as a Mecca may be turning on a bit strong, but it is neither blasphemous nor irreverent. Bingo is a milk-and-water and respectable form of gambling. And the strongest drink taken at bingo is tea. Moreover, Mecca itself is not given a favourable press even in the Koran: "God has afflicted the city [Mecca] with famine and fear as a punishment for what its people did." And it is just as well that Paradise has not been turned into a more precise toponym. The Koran's luscious description of gardens and fountains, rich silks and brocades, goblets of wine that gives no hangover, and regiments of "bashful virgins whom neither man nor jinn will have touched before" suggests a more exciting place than a bingo hall.

Our present is filled with the verbal shades and echoes of our past. And there is no rhyme or reverence about the process by which the names of people and places pass into the common currency of language. It is egregious when they do, for the words "stand out from the common herd". Lycium is a perfectly good toponym for a dance hall. The young men studied dancing and wrestling as well as philosophy at Aristotle's original "Lycium", now miles away from the Lycian coast. Colosseum was the place for mass melodramatic spectacles. Colosseums(-) in modernised spellings do the same today for modern blockbusters. The birthplace of the Christian Saviour was adopted as the common name for a lunatic asylum.

Oxford has made many toponyms: marmalade, trousers (Oxford bags), clay, corners (in printing), frames and religious enthusiasms. Only the shoes called oxfords can properly be printed without a capital letter. Its loss marks the final stage of transition from place name to common toponym.

Genes is the French name for Genoa, and by extension for a traditional style of trousers worn by Genoese sailors. Serge, de Nimes (denim) was the name of a tough blue siltcloth woven in the French town.

Levi Strauss (1829-1902) was a Bavarian who emigrated to New York at the age of 14 to join his brothers in supplying the new frontiersmen of the California Gold Rush. The Levi brothers had the notion of matching the denim cloth with the Genoese trousers, and strengthening the seams and pockets with brass rivets used for horse harness. This became the most durable and universal garment in the history of fashion. A German immigrant used French materials and Italian style to create blue jeans, an archetypal American product.

Toponyms enrich the language with history. They are not as common as eponyms, because of the pride of inventors and finders: eschschol/bia (given in 1821 by A. von Chamisso in compliment to J.F. von Eschscholtz, one of his colleagues in the Romanoff exploring expedition that classified the golden California poppy, and a trick question for spelling bees), begonia, and aubrieta (the French painter Claude Aubriet, dahlias, fuchsia and magnolia). But toponyms also play their part in the mazarika (Mazowiec, Poland) of language. The alstian was wearing a balachava and a gauze (Gaza) bikini. The labrador was dressed in a muslin (Mosul, Iraq) tuxedo (Tunde Park Country Club, New York) over a suede (Sweden) duffel coat (Duffel, Antwerp). They had reached the Mecca of dogs' dinners. It consists of pheasant from Phasis in Georgia, hamburgers, sardines and curries (Corinth) in mayonnaise (Mahon, Minorca), lapped down with sherry, champagne and bourbon. After this Venetian blind, they went on a canine conga (Congo). As well as a holy city, Mecca is an honourable toponym.

Cherry picker

THERE is an endearing consistency to the alcoholic preferences of the Prince of Wales: 30 years after he was reprimanded at Gordonstoun for ordering a cherry brandy in a pub, I can disclose that he will grant a royal warrant to Shepherd Neame. Their merchandise? Cherry brandy, drunk by Terry-Thomas and Belgian police types. "The Prince is giving us the warrant specifically for our cherry brandy," says a toper in their Kent HQ. "It was Queen Victoria's favourite drink and now Prince Charles appears to be very fond of it, too — he orders it by the crateful." Other drink dealers to be honoured this year by the Prince in the forthcoming Royal Warrant list include the champagne house, Laurent-Perrier, and Berry Bros, which supplies him with King's Ginger Liqueur, a potent brew once popular with Edward VII.

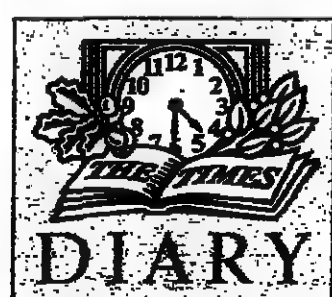
The Prince's palate is no less refined when it comes to solids. His new list of tradesmen includes the crimping expensive Jermyn Street cheesemonger, Paxton & Whitfield, and McPhersons Atlantic, which specialises in exotic mushrooms. "Prince Charles is particularly fond of our chateaufort and trompette — we deliver boxes of them to Buckingham Palace," says a fungus-grower. "He sometimes comes out picking with us." Despite the AA's bleating about the dangers of talking while driving, the Prince has also honoured a car-phone supplier.



Prince Charles: lingering taste

Hampshire Radio-Phones. It's all so different from Princess Diana's day. No new warrants have been issued to truck designers.

● AFTER years of declining support, the Tories have signed up some new members: G Pinochet, A Scargill and one H Lester. All were sent membership cards after postal applications carrying the names



of the unlikely characters were sent to Smith Square by Friday Night Armistice, the irreverent show on BBC2. Showing how desperate Tories are to attract new supporters, Gary Glitter and Darth Vader lookalikes successfully signed up.

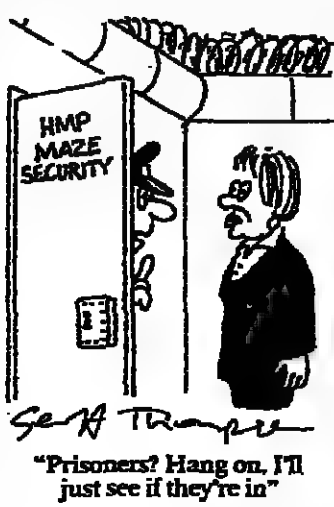
Vanity Clare

FOLLOWING my disclosure that Clare Short has burnt £40,000 of her International Development Department's bonai-sized budget on market research, I learn of another project boosting the minister's image: the launch of a fanzine which will lovingly record her work. Ms Short, who, as I have also noted is co-operating with makers of an ersatz "Clare: the movie" documentary, has approved the launch of Development without setting a budget.

"Her name is mentioned very occasionally," says an aide. "Not all the costs are quantifiable. It is necessary we publicise what the department does." Remarks a Tory: "Sounds like Vanity Fair."

Price check

THE newlywed Hagues will have to place embarrassing addendums on the mountain of thank-you letters for their generous wedding presents. A request for the price of each gift is required so that Hague can meet the tough strictures on



gifts received by MPs laid down by Sir Gordon Downey, the Standards Commissioner. "Any gifts received by an MP or spouse of an MP which relate to his membership of the House, and which are worth over £25 must be declared in the Register of Members' Interests. The scandal caused by a £100 coffee pot given to Anthony Crossland for opening a building could yet haunt Hague. To discover whether William must display his newly acquired family silver, I turned to a leading expert on Downey's law, Neil Hamilton: "William should put his presents on display in Westminster Hall, with price labels on each item. People should bid for the gifts."

Playing Balls

NICK HORNBY, the author of *Fever Pitch*, would appreciate new Labour's first big wedding tomorrow: guests have been asked to bring their football boots. Once ceremonies are over, Ed Balls — who runs the Treasury for his boss Gordon Brown — and the comely Yvette Cooper, a new Labour MP, want friends, both male and female, to knock a ball around. This should create a hearty appetite for fish and chips afterwards. This proletarian jaspery contrasts with the stag night — a discreet affair



Cooper: wedding match

for close friends — where drinks were enjoyed at Quaglin's, followed by dinner at Pont de la Tour. The best man should stick to football anecdotes — perhaps about Balls's birth. Ed's father, also a football fanatic, was horrified that the projected day for the Baby Balls birth clashed with an FA Cup tie between Manchester United and his beloved Norwich. Naturally, Big Balls chose to attend the Old Trafford match.

JASPER GERARD



TIME OUT TIME

A Clinton-Jones trial would be a futile fiasco

Over the course of the past two centuries the American presidency has passed from George Washington and Thomas Jefferson to Bill Clinton. Some might suggest that this progression stands as a powerful rebuttal to the theory of evolution. The Oval Office has suffered some dark days and dubious occupants. Nothing, though, can compare with what may be witnessed this year. In little over a week Mr Clinton will be required to offer sworn testimony in the White House. Paula Jones is entitled to attend and is expected to exercise her rights. Her presence will attract enormous attention. On May 27 the trial will commence. This will focus on such matters as the precise architecture of the President's sexual organs and the identity of his alleged mistresses. This will not be a dignified spectacle.

That a sitting President should be a defendant in a civil case is not an outrage. It would have been a disgrace if Mr Clinton had been shielded simply by virtue of his office. One of the few positive aspects of this affair has been the Supreme Court's striking assertion in *Clinton v Jones* that no person, however powerful his position, should be entitled to exceptional treatment. That a trial can properly proceed does not mean that this particular trial is preferable to an out-of-court settlement. A courtroom contest would not be in the best interests of Mr Clinton, Mrs Jones, or the wider American public.

It is difficult to envisage what a trial will settle. It would occur seven years from the alleged events in the Excelsior Hotel, Little Rock, and three years after Mrs Jones first brought them to national attention. The only witnesses — a set of state troopers responsible for Mr Clinton's protection — are not the most convincing of characters and have been inconsistent with their versions of events. The prior sexual conduct of Mr Clinton or Mrs Jones, although interesting to many, is surely irrelevant to this incident. It would be almost impossible to reach a coherent verdict. The sole certain element is that the reputations of everyone concerned would be dramatically devalued.

This fact has not passed unnoticed. Two years ago the parties were on the edge of a bargain. Mr Clinton's legal defence fund would have reimbursed the plaintiff's expenses. The President would have issued a statement in which he stated that, while he could not recall the matter, if he had done anything to cause offence to Mrs Jones then he apologised. Honour would have been just about satisfied and this circus averted. Unfortunately, the deal was ruined when Robert Bennett, the President's lawyer, appeared on television and argued that Mr Clinton was on the verge of vindication.

The attorneys on all sides have made their clients' lives more complicated. Mr Bennett's constant attacks on Mrs Jones — to the effect that she is a financial opportunist of dubious virtue — have enraged feminist organisations otherwise sympathetic to Mr Clinton. The original team of lawyers acting for Mrs Jones resigned after she rejected their advice to accept a compromise settlement. They have been replaced by an aggressive collection of Dallas-based attorneys under the control of Susan Carpenter McMillan. Mrs Carpenter McMillan does not appear to have an extensive record of intense interest in sexual harassment issues. Her profound personal contempt for Mr Clinton is rather better established.

It is time for common sense to make a belated appearance. The original settlement could and should be revived. If Mr Clinton and Mrs Jones were to order their representatives to approach it in the appropriate spirit. The alternative is a mutual and exceptionally public humiliation. The last prominent clash in this territory involved Anita Hill's (unsuccessful) televised attempt in 1991 to prevent the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the US Supreme Court. The judge spoke angrily on that occasion of a "high-tech lynching for uppity niggers". Conservatives, in particular, supported his contention. A Clinton-Jones trial would be a high-tech peep show with no positive prospects. Every possible effort should be made to ensure that it need not happen.

BRAVE HEART, COOL HEAD

Dewar is a safer First Minister than Cook

After a lifetime of campaigning for a Scottish parliament, Donald Dewar looks set to reap his reward. Yesterday he confirmed that he would stand as a candidate in next year's elections. Short of a political disaster, for Labour, north of the border, this virtually guarantees that he will be Scotland's first First Minister. He will not want to assume this until the electorate has spoken. The prospect of this post being held by Mr Dewar rather than his Cabinet rival, Robin Cook, is good news for Scotland, for the United Kingdom and for Tony Blair himself.

Mr Dewar is a wise, conscientious and thoughtful politician. Hugely popular with his colleagues, he is also respected and liked by his opponents. He is a convinced Unionist who has always believed that devolution would assuage Scotland's frustrations enough to secure the future of the nation within the United Kingdom. But he also knows that the Scottish executive will need to exercise its power responsibly if it is not to play into the hands of the nationalists. The SNP has an interest in conflict between Edinburgh and Westminster. Nationalists know that devolution will lead to independence only if grievances against England can be inflamed. Mr Dewar is savvy enough to realise that peaceful relations between the two parliaments and governments are in Scotland's and the United Kingdom's interests. If he can prove to Scots that, by running their own affairs, they can become a more self-confident and contented nation, he may even be able to reduce support for independence.

Mr Dewar is also a renowned team player. He knows that what he does in

Scotland will reflect on Labour's image in the country as a whole. He has no grievances against Mr Blair or Gordon Brown, and no private political points to prove. As he nears the end of a distinguished career, he has no personal ambition beyond that of setting Scotland's parliament on a responsible and successful path.

Mr Cook, however, is quite different. He is a man of many grievances and even more ambition. The two jobs that he would dearly love to occupy are those of Chancellor and Prime Minister. What is more, he would do the jobs differently from Messrs Brown and Blair. Were he to become First Minister of Scotland, he would be greatly tempted to use the position as a means of chafing against the policies being conducted in Westminster. Mr Cook would be inclined, for instance, to want to use Scotland's tax-raising powers. He might relish a battle with Mr Brown: the two have a mutual antipathy going back to their youth. He might even want to pick a fight with Mr Blair. It is no secret that Mr Cook covets the Labour leadership. What better launch pad than the Scottish premiership, from which he could enact policies that were always slightly more left-wing than those emanating from London?

While Mr Blair took hard decisions at Westminster, Mr Cook could criticise them from Edinburgh. Each party conference would become a popularity contest between Mr Cook and Mr Blair, with the easy applause taken by the former. Mr Blair must be relieved that his Foreign Secretary will for now be safely lodged in London or, even better, abroad. So should those who want devolution to proceed calmly and safely.

TIGER TURNS

It is time that the Chipperfields updated their act

Tigers are predators, not performers. They are wild, ungulate beasts with visceral instincts that cannot be tempered by captivity. When a four-year-old Bengal tiger turned on its trainer in a Florida circus ring this week, it was merely obeying its instincts. As the 19th-century biologist T. H. Huxley acidly but accurately observed: "a tiger has a natural right to eat a man."

Richard Chipperfield, the tiger's trainer, was critically injured in the attack. Last night he underwent three hours of complex facial surgery. We hope that he will recover. But he must have known the risks that he ran in his profession, that a big cat trainer can never afford to be anything but alert. And although details of the attack are still under police investigation, it appears that Mr Chipperfield turned his back on a beast which, in the wild, would naturally strike from behind. Having reared this particular tiger from birth, Mr Chipperfield appears to have trusted it too highly.

The deeper sadness of this accident lies in the slaughter of the tiger — shot some five times before it died — by Mr Chipperfield's brother. If, as appears to be the case, the animal was killed only after it had been whipped away from the wounded man and driven back into its cage, its destruction was a waste. The tiger is an endangered species. Fewer than 5,000 remain in the wild and already three species

— the Bali, the Caspian and the Javan — have vanished. This magnificent animal pads on the brink of extinction.

The Chipperfield family may now face police charges, whether for discharging a firearm in a public place or for cruelty to animals. But the real issue to be addressed is whether big cats such as the tiger have a role in such entertainment at all. Domestic animals may well earn their keep by performing in circuses; creatures of the wild are another matter entirely. In an age that has slowly learnt to value its natural inheritance, predators should be treated with dignity, not constantly transported in tiny cages or schooled in utterly pointless tricks. The Chipperfield family may boast an exceptional circus tradition dating back to the 17th century, but it is time they updated their act. The use of wild animals by unprincipled circus owners supports an illicit trade in endangered species.

Today our theatre correspondent reviews the striking new performance of Canada's Cirque du Soleil, now showing in London at the Albert Hall. This troupe, like virtually all modern circuses, uses no animals. Instead, imaginative dexterity and physical skill create an exotic spectacle which leaves audiences delighted. This is where the future of the circus lies. The future of the tiger rests only in careful captive breeding programmes and in our respect for the wild.

Mowlam 'bows to power of the gun'

From Mr David McGonigal

Sir, Is there any act which this Government will not undertake to secure the continuation of the negotiations for peace in Northern Ireland?

The decision by Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, to speak to men convicted of serious crimes of violence serving sentences of imprisonment in an attempt to persuade them to support the negotiations (report, December 29; see also letters, January 2) confirm that users of private transport value its advantages very highly.

It is a general and sensible rule of social market economics that if demand is pressing, a corresponding supply should be provided. Transport users should pay the costs, including any environmental costs such as pollution, on precisely the same terms as any other activity which imposes similar environmental costs.

All users would be charged as near as possible to the time and place of use — road pricing. Such a policy would invest in extra resources, whether new roads or public transport facilities, when the social costs of providing them were exceeded by the benefits to users. As in other sectors, investment decisions should reflect willingness to pay.

The main effects of the fashionable puritanism, with its unwillingness to make appropriate provision for private transport, will be a steady continuation of the spread of wasteful congestion, affecting more and more people, places and times of the day and week.

Such environmental costs would, I suggest, be greater than that of a rational transport policy, which would involve a significant mileage of new roads and investment in public transport, with the social costs paid by willing users.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN DAY,
Chart Place,
Chart Sutton, Kent ME17 3RE,
January 3.

Soldiering on

From Lord Younger of Leckie,
President of the Council of
Territorial Auxiliary and
Volunteer Reserve Associations

Sir, Melvyn Bragg ("Will men soldier on in the new century?", January 5) writes persuasively about the contribution of the example set by the Armed Services to our national character. I suggest, however, that he is somewhat too pessimistic about the prospects for the continuation of this ethos.

The extent to which the reserve forces and cadets still inculcate the virtues listed by Mr Bragg is not widely recognised. Independently of the regular forces, over a ten-year period, something like three quarters of a million people aged between 13 and 30 wear the Queen's uniform and undergo training based firmly on the culture of the Services. If we were to lose the structure of reserves and cadets which is still (just) nationwide, Mr Bragg's concerns would indeed be extremely serious. Once lost, that structure could never be rebuilt.

Ministerial statements suggest that the Government is well aware of this. The current Strategic Defence Review does not seem therefore to pose a threat, but failure to fund this element of defence spending would make the nation very much the poorer in spheres well beyond defence.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE YOUNGER,
President,
Council of Territorial Auxiliary
and Volunteer Reserve Associations,
Duke of York's Headquarters,
Chelsea, SW3 4SG,
January 6.

Staff of life

From Mr Paul Kember

Sir, More choice in the British bread bin (leading article, December 31)? Only if you want to eat genetically modified food. If you don't, and if our local supermarket is typical of high street food shops, the choice is getting less.

Virtually all the bread and bakery products on the shelves contain soya flour or other derivatives of the soya bean.

Most soya beans come from the US, where there is a deliberate policy of mixing genetically modified beans with natural beans. Thus all food products which contain soya bean products are likely to contain genetically modified material.

Is this a conspiracy by the food industry to force us to eat genetically modified food?

Yours faithfully,
PAUL KEMBER,
9 Browning Hill,
Cudhoe, Co Durham DH6 4HB,
January 1.

Making doubly sure

From Mr Howard Mitchell

Sir, Your Business News report ("Banks lose £2bn over five years to loan fraudsters", December 29) contains the extraordinary suggestion that to reduce fraud bankers should inspect any property pledged as collateral against loans.

What next — perhaps the return of the bank manager?

Yours faithfully,
HOWARD MITCHELL,
Hilltop House, 208 The Hill,
Burford, Oxfordshire OX8 4HX,
December 29.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9DN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Paying the cost of road congestion

From Professor Emeritus Alan Day

Sir, The campaign to restrict private road traffic is in danger of losing all sense of proportion. Recent studies (report, December 29; see also letters, January 2) confirm that users of private transport value its advantages very highly.

It is a general and sensible rule of social market economics that if demand is pressing, a corresponding supply should be provided. Transport users should pay the costs, including any environmental costs such as pollution, on precisely the same terms as any other activity which imposes similar environmental costs.

All users would be charged as near as possible to the time and place of use — road pricing. Such a policy would invest in extra resources, whether new roads or public transport facilities, when the social costs of providing them were exceeded by the benefits to users. As in other sectors, investment decisions should reflect willingness to pay.

The main effects of the fashionable puritanism, with its unwillingness to make appropriate provision for private transport, will be a steady continuation of the spread of wasteful congestion, affecting more and more people, places and times of the day and week.

Such environmental costs would, I suggest, be greater than that of a rational transport policy, which would involve a significant mileage of new roads and investment in public transport, with the social costs paid by willing users.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN DAY,
Chart Place,
Chart Sutton, Kent ME17 3RE,
January 3.

From Dr David Brancher

Sir, Mr Steven Norris, Director-General of the Road Haulage Association, claims that his survey of the congestion caused by his members on new motorways and intersections proves the case for even more expenditure (report, "If you really want to go to hell, take the M25", December 31). Many will feel, rather, that it shows its futility.

Mr Norris rightly wants car users

Lottery reserves

From the Executive Director of the
Council for the Advancement of the
Arts, Recreation and Education

Sir, Anne Faulkner (letter, January 5) asks for lottery money to help small medical research charities. The money is there, but it is not being used efficiently. Charities in general have so far been able to draw down only 33 per cent of the £975 million available from the National Lottery Distribution Fund. A residue of about £3.4 billion has accumulated and is still waiting to be paid out because of bureaucratic delays.

Medical research is not the only area to suffer. When the second reading of the National Lotteries Bill took place in the House of Lords last

'Pernicious' CAP

From Mrs Linda Whetstone

Sir, Where does Magnus Lindkvist get the notion ("Give the country some air", January 1) that agricultural "subsidies are there to protect the consumer from expensive food"?

The EU is surrounded by high tariff walls on agricultural products in order to keep prices for European farmers higher than they are in the world outside — much higher on average over many years. Higher prices for farmers mean higher prices for consumers — much higher over many years.

According to OECD figures, the transfer from EU consumers and taxpayers to farmers topped £65 billion in 1995 and the bigger the farmers the more they received, with the largest 20

Classic choice

From the Publisher of
Everyman's Library

Sir, Philip Howard takes us to task for certain apparent omissions ("I've got a little list: they'll all of them be raised", January 6) in our list of classics published in *The Times* today. This list is not yet definitive.

We of course welcome any form of public debate as to which titles should be included. Nevertheless, any list of only 250 titles will inevitably miss someone's favourites, whether from lack of space or, as Mr Howard points out, problems of copyright.

However, I can assure him that the final choice will include the New Testament, the Book of Common Prayer, both part of what he rightly calls the "bedrock of English literature", the Everyman volume of Hindu Scriptures, Pope, Wordsworth and Hugo's *Les Misérables*.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID CAMPBELL,
Publisher,
Everyman's Library,
79 Berwick Street, W1V 3PF,
January 6.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

A fond look back at Bridge Street

From Mrs Joan A. F. Horton

Sir, It was pleasing to read ("Des res with a classic view", December 29) of Sir Michael Hopkins's "palace of bronze, stone and glass" that has finally been given the go-ahead at Bridge Street, Westminster. For far too long this beautiful area of London has been a sad mess.

My father was residential steward at Palace Chambers (one of two buildings on this site), where my parents and I lived from 1961 to 1965. Despite our being the only residents, there was a real sense of community with the past.

The roll book of 1749 shows votes cast on Bridge Street by a resident grocer, victualler, distiller and coffee-man. The 1841 census recorded a hotel with a solicitor, two surgeons, a chemist and tailor in residence. Other premises included haberdashers, a confectioner, cheesemonger, carpenter, auctioneer and tavern keeper.

In its Florence Nightingale exhibition, Claydon House, Buckinghamshire, has a letter addressed to her at 9 Bridge Street.

In 1871, the census shows few residents because of the construction of the Metropolitan Railway (District/Circle Line). At the 1901 census the site was again virtually empty because of the Jubilee Line construction.

By 1881, Palace Chambers had been built and contained nine live-in staff plus a residential steward and his family.

When we moved in, it was an office block, almost half occupied by the Civil Service. I knew all the tenants, as well as many regular visitors. At street level there were small shops.

Like Sir Michael's building, Palace Chambers was built around an open well, and from the roof we could watch trains passing underneath. Occasionally we would lose an item of washing onto the tracks.

In 1965, the Government had a grandiose plan for Bridge Street and compulsorily purchased Palace Chambers, so we had to move. We were, I believe, the last family to live there.

It is to be hoped that Sir Michael's building will not be yet another enclosed, faceless fortress, but will include shops, cafes and attractions to revive Bridge Street's community atmosphere.

Yours faithfully,
JOAN A. F. HORTON,
26 The Crescent, Slough SL1 2LQ,
January 5.

Missing Catholics

From Mrs Daphne McLeod

Sir, I was sorry to see your report, "Roman Catholic alarm at falling attendance" (January 3), but not surprised.

Many faithful Catholics have been warning the bishops for years that the inevitable result of the faulty religious instruction given in most Catholic schools today would be a drastic fall in numbers.

For years now 90 per cent of Catholic school-leavers also leave the Church, yet the same people using the same methods are still allowed to decide what is taught in our schools. I cannot imagine any commercial enterprise continuing to use a team who fail so drastically.

Yours sincerely,
DAPHNE McLEOD
(Chairman,
Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice),
4 Fife Way,
Great Bookham, Surrey KT23 3PH,
January 4.

Plastic padding

From Mr Peter Tanner

Sir, The proliferation of plastic credit cards (letters, December 31, January 2) also raises the problem of misleading cards without being aware of it, a likely eventuality not covered by insurance policies.

I have therefore adopted the practice of writing alongside my signature on the back of the card, "age 70" (which I very nearly and very obviously am). This should at least reduce the risk of some whippersnapper tendering a card which is clearly the property of an old dodger.

Yours faithfully,
PETER TANNER,
Gibbs,
Impstone Road, Pamber Heath,
Hampshire RG26 3EG,
January 2.

From Mr Robert Freer

Sir, Shall we soon see a return of the Victorian card case to carry plastic cards, the double-ended Albert watch-chain to fasten the case to, and the waistcoat to hang it all from?

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT FREER,
14 Alleyne Crescent, SE21 8BN,
January 3.

From Dr John Burscough

Sir, I have accumulated nine "loyalty" cards from various stores and supermarkets. Does this make me more loyal, or less?

Yours faithfully,
JOHN BURSCOUGH,
Woodland View,
Melton Road, Wrawby,
Brigg, Lincolnshire DN20 8SS,
December 31.

month (report, December 19, later editions) the Government declined to give assurances about lottery funds for the arts or sport after 2001. Yet the lottery was created to protect and improve the quality of life for all.

Despite all the money paid out, the undistributed lottery reserves increase by £88 million on average a month. The endowment of nationwide coaching of sport, recreation and the arts is the permanent way to create the basis of a better society. This money must be spent promptly.

Yours truly,
DENIS VAUGHAN,
Executive Director,
Council for the Advancement of the
Arts, Recreation and Education,
41 Floral Street, WC2E 9DG,
January 7.

per cent dividing about 40 per cent of the entire EU budget between them. The transfer from every single person in the EU to farmers was about £260 that year, or over £20 a week for the average family of four. The average EU farmer benefited from this to the tune of about £300 per acre.

In 1994 an average of nearly 40 per cent of the final producer price of major commodities was made up by subsidies from the consumer (ie, higher food prices), with the burden falling heaviest on the poorest families.

The common agricultural policy will go down in history as one of the most pernicious policies ever devised.

Yours,
LINDA WHETSTONE,
Bassett's Manor,
Hartfield, Sussex TN7 4LA,
January 2.

Hunting and Church

From the Reverend Toddy Hoare

Sir, It is hard to credit the Archbishop of Wales and others on their whimsical attitude to hunting (letter, December 26; see also letters, December 31). There is no evidence that Hubert renounced hunting. It is more important that, through the vision of the cross in the stag's antlers (an ancient fertility symbol), he found Christ. Often the witness of the hardened strains of nature speaks the most strongly.

The stand that many take against hunting can be equated more with the attitude of those who give in to road rage. The Church is about encouraging people to give others the space to be and discouraging government by bias and envy.

There is no moral argument against hunting, save respecting the quarry. I doubt anyone actually enjoys the killing in any field sport, any more than the priests of old preparing animal sacrifices. Instead we all need to be in the real world, not a sanitised view of it, and look at life.

Yours faithfully,
TODDY HOARE,
Leske Vicarage,
Knapton,
Thirsk, North Yorkshire YO7 4AZ,
January 5.



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

January 8: The Princess Royal, President, The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, this morning attended a Highland Carers Day at the Town House, Inverness, and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Inverness-shire (the Lord Gray of Contin).

Her Royal Highness this afternoon visited the Apex Highland Employment Services Unit, Loddon Street, Inverness.

The Princess Royal, Patron, Spinal Injuries Association, this evening attended the UK Oil and Gas Industry Quiz 1998 at the beach Ball Room, Beach Promenade, Aberdeen, and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of the City of Aberdeen (Councillor Mrs Margaret Farquhar, the Lord Provost).

ST JAMES'S PALACE

January 8: The Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall, this morning received the Secretary of the Duchy of Cornwall (Mr Robert Ross).

January 8: The Duke of Kent, Vice-Chairman, the British Overseas Trade Board, and Patron, the British Overseas Trade Board, this afternoon attended a Reception given by Her Majesty's Consul (Mr Ralph Griffin) for the Pitt Imagination Uomo Menswear Exhibition at the

British Consulate. The Duke of Kent later attended a Dinner given by the British Overseas Trade Board at the Excelsior Hotel.

Mr Nicolas Adamson is in attendance.

THATCHED HOUSE LODGE

RICHMOND PARK
January 8: Princess Alexandra, accompanied by the Rt Hon Sir Angus Ogilvy, this afternoon attended a Luncheon with the Court of the Vintners' Company at Vintners' Hall, Upper Thames Street, London EC4.

Her Royal Highness, President, later visited the offices of the Children's Country Holidays Fund at 42/43 Lower Marsh, London SE1.

The Queen has been pleased to appoint Commodore Anthony Morrow CVO, RN to be an Extra Equerry to Her Majesty.

Royal engagements

The Duke of York, as patron, will launch the 1998 Year of Photography and the Electronic Image, Impressions Gallery, Castlegate, York, at 11.00; will launch the Duke of York's Initiative, at Ashdam Bryan College, at 11.55; will visit Hamilton Painters Football Club, Knavesmire Road, at 2.40; and as patron, Year of Photography and the Electronic Image, will attend a reception at the Mansion House, York, at 3.35.

School news

Arnold School, Blackpool

The Lent Term began on January 6 and will end on March 27. Mr Keith Gedhill, MBE, CSU, DL, has retired as Chairman of Governors after 15 years of outstanding service and is succeeded by Sir Martin Holdgate, CB, MA, PhD (Canterbury). Mr R. Jones joins the staff as Director of PE and Games. The term's events include: Entrance Examination on January 10 followed by an RSCA Scholarship Examination on January 16; the opening of the IT and the Languages Centres by Lord Taylor of Blackburn on January 26; Prefect Dinner on February 26; Headmaster's Debate on March 14; The Jean Torrance Memorial Hockey Tournament on March 14; Annual Hockey fixture v Brentwood School on March 21; GVS & DGS on March 19, 20, 21; CCF Annual Inspection on March 20; Bridge Conference on March 25; School Concert on March 25. During Half Term there will be an English Dept trip to Dublin and during the Easter vacation there will be a skiing holiday in Italy, a Classics trip to Pompeii, a Geography fieldcourse in Devon, and an RSCA camp in Kinder. The Junior School Swimming Gala takes place on February 13 and the Annual Arts Week takes place March 23-27.

Arnold School, Blackpool is a registered charity which exists for the education of children. Charity No 526679.

Queenswood School

The Spring Term at Queenswood begins on Sunday, January 11, with Juliet Clarke-Smith as Head Girl and Charlotte Philpott as Deputy Head Girl. The new year has been completely refurbished by Bishop and Son of London and a gala recital by Dame Gillian Weir on Monday, February 9, will mark its opening.

Sedburgh School

Scholarships & Awards
The following awards were made for the academic year 1997-8:
Academic Scholarships: C. N. Buckley (Crested House), J. P. Monaghan (J. P. Stark (Malton)).

Medical Officers of Schools Association

The Annual General Meeting of the Medical Officers of Schools Association will take place on Saturday, January 10, 1998, at the Lincoln College, West Sussex. This will be preceded by a weekend of clinical meetings and followed by the Annual Dinner.

Legal appointments

Council of HM Circuit Judges
The following have been elected Officers of the Council of HM Circuit Judges:
President: Judge Paul Charles Senior
President: Judge Charles Senior
President: Judge Charles Senior
President: Judge Charles Senior



Keith Reynolds, left, and Brian Milton with their microlight yesterday

Microlight pair travel in footsteps of Phileas Fogg

By TIM JONES

STRAPPED into a large hang-glider with a motorbike engine slung underneath, two Englishmen are at an attempt to be the first to circumnavigate the globe in a microlight aircraft.

Brian Milton, 55, and his co-pilot Keith Reynolds, 45, hope to emulate the fictional Phileas Fogg by completing their 24,301-mile journey in 80 days. They will leave London at the end of March and plan to fly over 25 countries and across parts of the Atlantic and Pacific.

They and their 33ft wingspan machine will have to endure extremes of temperature and weather in their record attempt. One of the most dangerous sections will be on the last leg when, with no cockpit canopy to shield them, they fly at 15,000 ft over the Greenland ice sheet and the North Atlantic to Iceland.

Mr Milton, a financial journalist from London, said that if their single 1,200cc engine fails over the ice field there will be no hope of rescue or chance of surviving for long in such a hostile environment. He said that the flight was one of the few

challenges left in aviation: "It is a very human adventure and technology plays virtually no part in it."

He established, in 1987, the record for the longest and fastest microlight flight, from London to Sydney in 59 days.

Mr Reynolds, from Rochester, is a former British national hang-glider champion.

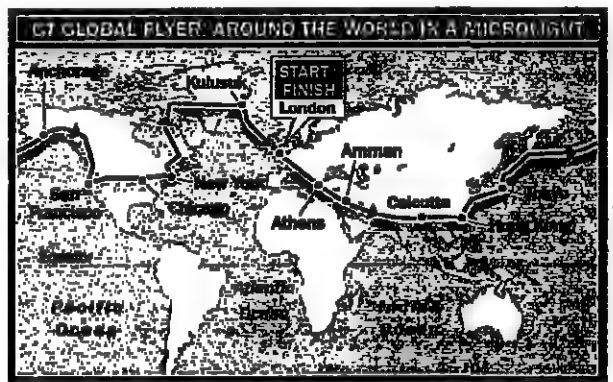
The pair will fly 2,264 miles across Europe before making a 2,058-mile leg over the Middle East, where they plan to follow a pipeline through Saudi Arabia to avoid straying into Iraq.

From there, they fly 3,508 miles across Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Burma before hugging the coast of

China on their way to Japan and northern Russia. That 4,611-mile leg will end when they use the Aleutian Islands as stepping stones to Alaska, Canada and the United States.

The final 11,860-mile leg will take them across the United States before they turn north for Iceland and home via the Faeroe Isles, Orkney, Edinburgh and Liverpool.

The cost of the adventure, estimated at £350,000, is being met by the sponsors, GT Global, an investment fund company, information on all aspects of the journey will appear on the Internet on www.gtglobalflyer.org



Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Gilbert Abbott & Sedgwick, comic writers, London: 1811; Charles Kipling, publisher, London: 1824; John Watson, psychologist, Greenwald, South Carolina, 1878; Laurence Abernethy, poet and critic, Ashton-upon-Mersey, 1881; Karl Caplan, writer and dramatist, Male Svatonovce, Czechoslovakia, 1890; Dame Grace Field, singer, Rochdale, Lancashire, 1896; Simone de Beauvoir, novelist and critic, 1908; Rose Louise Horvitz (Gypsy Rose Lee), actress and striptease artist, 1914.

DEATHS: Caroline Herschel, astronomer, Hanover, 1838; Napoleon III, French Emperor, 1871; John Watson, psychologist, Greenwald, South Carolina, 1978; Karl Mannheim, sociologist, London, 1991; Sir Luigi Nervi, engineer and architect, Rome, 1979; Sir Charles Curran, Director-General of the BBC 1969-71, 1980. Income tax was introduced by William Pitt the Younger, 1799. Anthony Eden resigned as Prime Minister, 1967.

University news

Oxford
The Queen's College
To scholarships:
Emma Louise Matthews, formerly of Newman College, Preston.
Simon Webster McKnight, formerly of St Edmund's Grammar School, Alton.
Paul Francis Felix Murray, formerly of Queen's College, Taunton.
Ranick Kian Ming Ng, formerly of Queen's College, Taunton.
Andrew James Peckham, formerly of St Edmund's Grammar School, Alton.
Elizabeth Kathleen Pounds-Cornish, formerly of Wellington College, Berkshire.
Richard James Price, formerly of Watford Boys Grammar School.
Sumit Sanjay Rahmat, formerly of St Edmund's Grammar School, Alton.
Jane Christina Rankin, formerly of Goldsmiths & Layman School.
Timothy Rupert Riley, formerly of Eton College.

Appointments

To be Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London:
Mrs Susan Limmann-Colson & S. F. Morris.

Luncheon

Blackwelder's Company
Mr Tim Herring, Prime Warden of the Blackwelder's Company, presided at the cutting and distribution of the Epiphany Cakes at a luncheon held yesterday at the Epiphany Hall. The Earl and Countess Shannon were the guests of honour.

Dinner

Lord Mayor
The Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress entertained at dinner at the Mansion House last evening the Chief Commoner and Members of the Court of Common Council, the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Mayors and Leaders of Greater London Boroughs, Aldermen, High Officers of the Corporation of London and Ward Clerks of the City of London.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr C.W. Alcock and Miss A.L. White
The engagement is announced between Christopher, son of Mr and Mrs T.D. Alcock, of Birstall, Leicestershire, and Amanda, daughter of Mr and Mrs G.J.D. White, of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire.

Mr F.B. Amy and Miss A. Pang
The engagement is announced between Fergus, son of Major and Mrs Robert Amy, of St Brades, Jersey, and Andrea, only daughter of Mr and Mrs C.F. Pang, of Hong Kong and Bournemouth.

Mr S.R. Angus and Miss H.M. Lamborne
The engagement is announced between Shane, son of Mr and Mrs S.R. Angus, of Levington, Suffolk, and the late Miss H.M. Lamborne, of Levington, Suffolk.

Mr P.M.W. Blake and Miss M.C. Asmus
The engagement is announced between Peter, eldest son of the late Lieutenant Colonel E.E.T. Blake, and the late Miss M.C. Asmus, of Levington, Suffolk.

Mr M. Chavira and Miss J.V. Norris
The engagement is announced between Michael, son of Mr and Mrs M. Chavira, of Notting Hill, London, and the late Miss J.V. Norris, of Levington, Suffolk.

Mr R.L. Coleman and Miss G.H. Seale
The engagement is announced between Ben, third son of Mr and Mrs Christopher Coleman, of Reigate, Surrey, and Gemma, eldest daughter of Mrs Seale, of Reigate, Surrey.

Mr C.D.B. Cope and Miss S.C. Daykin
The engagement is announced between Christopher, second son of Mr Richard Cope, of Brampton, Cambridgeshire, and the late Miss S.C. Daykin, of Brampton, Cambridgeshire.

Mr C.M.J. Felt and Miss P.M. Green
The engagement is announced between Charles, elder son of Mr and Mrs C.M.J. Felt, of Hampshire, London, and Pamela, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs David Green, of Tottenham, London.

Mr J. Finley and Miss V.E.H. West
The engagement is announced between Jacob, son of the late Dr Paul Finley and Mrs V.E.H. West, of Tottenham, London, and Victoria, daughter of Mr and Mrs John West, of Epsom, Surrey.

Mr F.B.M. Hamilton and Miss M.C. Savage
The engagement is announced between Fergus, son of Mr and Mrs F.B.M. Hamilton, of Leicestershire, and the late Miss M.C. Savage, of Leicestershire.

Mr J.E. Harcourt and Miss S.E. Kidd
The engagement is announced between John, son of Mr and Mrs J.E. Harcourt, of Clannagh House, Isle of Man, and Sarah, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs S.E. Kidd, of Merchiston Park, Edinburgh.

Mr G. Harper and Miss S.E. Nathan
The engagement is announced between Garry, youngest son of Mr and Mrs W.B. Harper, of Bradwell, Derbyshire, and Sally, daughter of Dr and Mrs Nathan, of Linsfield, Surrey.

Mr J.D. Hope and Miss A.E. Minchin
The engagement is announced between Jason, elder son of Mr and Mrs Derek Hope, of Dunedin, New Zealand, and Alexandra, daughter of Mr and Mrs Peter Minchin, of Wadhurst, East Sussex.

Mr P.H. Hopkins and Miss L.L. Klemme
The engagement is announced between Peter, son of Mr and Mrs D.A. Hopkins, of Tilford, Surrey, and Emma, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs L.L. Klemme, of Langfield, Schleswig, Germany.

Mr T.J. Matthews and Miss L.G. Westley-Richards
The engagement is announced between Tom, elder son of Mr and Mrs Neil Matthews, of Rusep, West Sussex, and Lucy, daughter of Mrs Westley-Richards, of Rusep, West Sussex.

Mr O.N. Menchinsk and Miss M.A. Chavira
The engagement is announced between Oliver, son of Mr and Mrs O.N. Menchinsk, of Leicestershire, and the late Miss M.A. Chavira, of Leicestershire.

Mr M.D. Miles and Miss S.A. Moriarty
The engagement is announced between Michael, elder son of Mr and Mrs M.D. Miles, of Dorset, and Sarah, daughter of Mr and Mrs S.A. Moriarty, of Dorset.

Mr J.H. Moorhead and Miss M.E. Waller
The engagement is announced between John, son of Mr and Mrs J.H. Moorhead, of Hong Kong, and Emma, daughter of Mr and Mrs M.E. Waller, of Chichester, Dorset.

Mr D.A. Newey and Miss J. Crozier
The engagement is announced between David, son of the late Mr D.A. Newey, of Leicestershire, and the late Miss J. Crozier, of Leicestershire.

Mr T. Terry and Miss S.E. Kidd
The engagement is announced between Terry, son of Mr and Mrs T. Terry, of Leicestershire, and the late Miss S.E. Kidd, of Leicestershire.

Mr J.E. Harcourt and Miss S.E. Kidd
The engagement is announced between John, son of Mr and Mrs J.E. Harcourt, of Clannagh House, Isle of Man, and Sarah, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs S.E. Kidd, of Merchiston Park, Edinburgh.

Mr A.K. Pennington and Miss T.E. Keene
The engagement is announced between Adam, younger son of Mr and Mrs J. Pennington, of Milcombe, Cumbria, and Tracy, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs G.R. Keene, of Winslow, Cheshire.

Mr R.W.L. Plaitstone and Miss S.L. Oakden
The engagement is announced between Richard, elder son of Mr and Mrs Ian Plaitstone, of Ellesborough, Buckinghamshire, and Sarah, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Peter Oakden, of Beaumont End, Buckinghamshire.

Mr L.D. Ran and Miss R.E. Levy
The engagement is announced between Leonard, son of Mr and Mrs Anthony Ran, of London, and Ruth, daughter of Dr and Mrs Allen Levy, of Champaign, Illinois.

Mr E.S.W. Roskill and Miss V.M. Wilson
The engagement is announced between Edward, son of Mr and Mrs Nicholas Roskill, of Camberwell, London, and Victoria, daughter of Brigadier Sir Matthew and Lady Wilson, of Woodstock, Vermont.

Mr R. Taylor and Miss A. Hockman
The engagement is announced between Richard, son of Mr and Mrs Robert Taylor, of Leicestershire, and Alison, daughter of Mr and Mrs John Hockman, of Bristol.

Mr S.J. Thomas and Miss J.A. Simpson
The engagement is announced between Simon, only son of Mrs Susan Thomas and of Mr Philip Thomas, both of Tavistock, and Jessamine Anne, younger daughter of Canon and Mrs John Simpson, of Bristol.

Mr M.C.F. Thompson and Miss G. Quest
The engagement is announced between Mark, eldest son of Mr Colin Thompson, of Sutton Verry, Wiltshire, and Mrs Rosemary Walker, of Kellaways, Wiltshire, and Gillian, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs S.W. Quest, of Stanmore, Middlesex, and Singapore.

Mr A.J.S. Walker and Miss R. Denning-Smithman
The engagement is announced between Andrew, elder son of Mr Colin and Lady Walker, of Hachington, Suffolk, and Rebecca, daughter of Major and Mrs Peter Denning-Smithman, of Ipswich, Suffolk.

Mr R.D.D. Wilson and Miss T.S. Edmondson
The engagement is announced between Ross, younger son of Mr and Mrs Alistair Wilson, of Natal, South Africa, and Tess, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs James Edmondson, of Northampton, Northamptonshire.

Mr S.L. James and Miss M.M. Whitmore
The marriage took place quietly, in Chichester, on January 7, between Mr Stephen James and Mrs Monique Whitmore.

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Latest wills

Edith Winifred Hall, of Bedford, left estate valued at £106,449 net. The late £10,000 in the current will was cancelled. In her will, she left £10,000 to the Children's Society, £10,000 to the Children's Society, £10,000 to the Children's Society, £10,000 to the Children's Society.

Rita Scott-Brown, of Brighthelm, Sussex, left estate valued at £1,381,791 net. She left £500 each to the RAF Benevolent Fund and to John and Susan Scott-Brown, of Chichester, near Brighton.

Rodney Ud Stacey, of Cambridge, left estate valued at £1,411,502 net. He left £1,000 each to the RAF Benevolent Fund and to John and Susan Scott-Brown, of Chichester, near Brighton.

Keith McLennan MacKintosh, company director, of Blackburn, Lancashire, left estate valued at £1,061,944 net. He left £1,000 each to the RAF Benevolent Fund and to John and Susan Scott-Brown, of Chichester, near Brighton.

Kathleen Kewler, of London N2, left estate valued at £1,719,048 net. She left £1,000 each to the RAF Benevolent Fund and to John and Susan Scott-Brown, of Chichester, near Brighton.

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BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

BIRTHS

SEWINGHOUSE-DWANE - On 6th January 1998, to Cheryl and Paul, a daughter, Charlotte, and a son, Joshua.

SMITH - On December 31st at the Portland Hospital, to Mrs. Anthony, a son, Joshua David.

VERDON-ROE - On December 29th 1997, to Robert and Susan, a daughter, Rebecca Elizabeth.

WARRER - On January 2nd, to Catherine and Dominic, a son, Rupert Anthony Macdonald.

DEATHS

CLARE - Kathleen died on 5th January 1998 aged 85, after a long illness, at her home, 10, Kingsway House, Bedford, Bedfordshire.

GARTHWAITES - On 18th December 1997, to Susan and George (née Bailey), a son, Philip William Rogers, a brother for Susan.

LIVESTONES - On 18th December 1997, to Susan and George (née Bailey), a son, Philip William Rogers, a brother for Susan.

PLAY - On December 27th at the Portland Hospital, to Mrs. Anthony, a son, Joshua David.

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DEATHS

CRAWFORD - Robert Norman CBE, peacefully on 6th January 1998, at the Alexandra Duff Duff and Galloway Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, Scotland, aged 85.

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OBITUARIES

SIR FRANK ROBERTS

Sir Frank Roberts, CCMG, GCVO, diplomat, died on January 7 aged 90. He was born on October 27, 1907.

Sir Frank Roberts's 38-year career in the British Foreign Service sparked from the first day to the last. He saw service before the war in the Foreign Office and in Paris and Cairo. He had a good and complicated war in London, serving for some time as the British representative to the Czechoslovak Government in exile. In the early postwar years he was, successively, Minister in the Embassy in Moscow, Principal Private Secretary to Ernest Bevin and Deputy High Commissioner in India. Then came missions of his own: he was Ambassador to Yugoslavia, to Nato, to the Soviet Union and to the Federal Republic of Germany in turn.

But the prolonged achievement which followed his retirement from the Foreign Service in 1968 came close to outshining his official career. He was a director of Mercedes (UK), of Hoechst (UK) and of the Anglo-German Metal Corporation. He was the president of the Anglo-German Association, the chairman of the German Chamber of Commerce in the UK and vice-president of the Great Britain-USSR Association. He wrote frequently, and interviewers courted him. He also greatly helped innumerable historians and graduate students.

In his 84th year he published a solid book about his diplomatic experiences, *Dealing with Dicta-*

tors. He continued vigorously active virtually until his death, in demand as a chairman of meetings, as a dinner guest and as a public speaker.

Frank Kenyon Roberts was born in Buenos Aires, and educated at Bedales, Rugby and Trinity College, Cambridge. He joined the Foreign Service in 1930 and in 1937 he married a wealthy and ever-supportive wife, Celeste, Lella Beatrice, the daughter of Sir Said Shoukri Pasha, the financial adviser to the Government of the Sudan.

When war broke out he was just 32, serving in the Foreign Office's Central Department in London, a coming man of phenomenal vigour and intelligence, equipped at all points for life near the centre in wartime Whitehall. It was the war that gave him and his contemporaries responsibilities and promotions at ages rarely achieved before or since. Roberts himself was a Minister (the position immediately below Ambassador in a major embassy) at the age of 38, a Deputy Under Secretary of State at 44 and an ambassador by 47.

Before he achieved an embassy of his own, Roberts experienced one check, perhaps the only one in his career. As private secretary to Ernest Bevin he was perhaps too vigorous, too perfect for his own good. He may have got on Bevin's formidable nerves. He moved out of the private office rather, sooner than might have been expected, and his next post, Delhi, was far from the Europe whose complexities he had made his own. But



in due course he and his wife found their feet in India, and by the time they left it had broadened still further their formidable experience.

London, to which Roberts returned in 1951, was more his cup of tea. He filled a Deputy Under Secretary's post, one of the seven most senior appointments in the

Foreign Office, for three busy years before his appointment as Ambassador in Belgrade in 1954.

Roberts was fortunate in the timing of each of his ambassadorships. He went to Belgrade in 1954, at a time when it had real importance. Tito was making himself a world figure by simultaneously building his country's position

in the Non-Aligned Movement, mending some of his fences with Moscow and holding his diverse federal republic together. Roberts was there at a critical time, during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and its extinction by a Kremlin which was warily colluding with Belgrade.

Roberts moved from Belgrade to

to be Ambassador to Nato in Brussels in 1957. He was serving there when American missiles with nuclear warheads were deployed in Europe for the first time, when Harold Macmillan went to Moscow in his white fur hat in search of a new hope in East-West relations, when Nikita Khrushchev discovered the American Midwest as President Eisenhower's guest, and when Charles de Gaulle set about detaching his country from the military structure of the Nato Alliance.

In 1960 Roberts moved to Moscow, where the beleaguered Khrushchev had embarked on the adventurous foreign policy that was to lead to the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 and eventually to his own eclipse. And in 1963 he went to Bonn for five final years. In the Foreign Service, years of renewed tensions over Berlin, of Germany's full return to the family of nations, of state visits between Britain and Germany, and of Britain's renewed interest (vetted by de Gaulle) in membership of the European Economic Community.

Roberts's intellectual reputation was established and his phenomenal energy was acknowledged. But to all these posts he brought also a gift for dealing with people. He was not always liked, and some said not always likeable, but there was no gainsaying his insatiable appetite for business, for information and for acquaintance. He was a short man, almost birdlike, and both Tito and Khrushchev seem to have made an intellectually formidable pet of him. At the Atlantic Council

and in Bonn he commanded the respect due to a man who was always master of his brief, could almost always persuade his Government, and who was untiringly curious.

He made the transition from public service in 1968 without missing a beat. His recent German connections provided a firm base in private sector directorships and public organisations. Year after year he was to be seen at Anglo-German occasions, notably the annual Königswinter Conference, and at the events of the Anglo-German Society. But he did not neglect his Soviet and Atlantic links, pursuing and reinforcing them in the United Kingdom-USSR Association and in innumerable Atlantic forums. In the year of his retirement he was called in to serve on a committee reviewing Britain's overseas representation. The publication of *Dealing with Dictators* (1991) attracted more attention to a man who could talk of things which to others were distant history as if they had happened yesterday.

Roberts's wife died in 1990. They were childless, and she was throughout a long marriage his constant companion and support; her loss might have marked the end of his formidable energies and love of life, but he rode out this blow, and an increasing range of physical handicaps, undaunted. Appointed CMG in 1946, he was advanced to KCMG in 1953 and GCMG a decade later. He was appointed GCVO in 1965, the year he was also awarded the Grand Cross of the German Order of Merit.

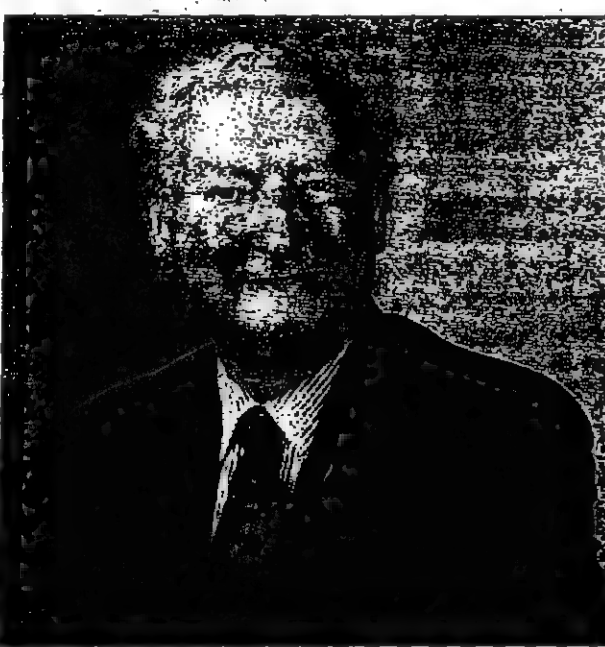
DAVID WAINWRIGHT

David Wainwright, author and journalist, died from lung cancer on January 5 aged 68. He was born on February 21, 1929.

DAVID WAINWRIGHT wrote 19 books, covering a variety of topics, from midwifery to journalism. His earliest works were concerned with youth training — notably history of Voluntary Service Overseas and of the first years of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme — but he also produced a history of Liverpool College, his own old school. Later, after a career spent in journalism and at the Social Science Research Council, he wrote house histories.

David Wainwright was born on Merseyside, the only child of Thomas and Mary Wainwright. His father, a civil servant, was the youngest of a large family and the first to go to university. He had similar aspirations for his son, who was sent to boarding school at the age of eight and grew up lonely and isolated. Wainwright's main interests were writing and music and, although he never distinguished himself in examinations, he left school with a good enough record to gain a place at St Edmund Hall, Oxford.

He was called up for National Service before university, and joined the Royal Army Service Corps. In 1948, when he was given command, with typical Army whimsy, of HM The King's Baggage. A shy, quiet youngster who had only been to London once, he



was detailed to take charge of the convoy of six 3-ton trucks that had fought their way across North Africa with the 8th Army and subsequently been used to carry the royal luggage from Buckingham Palace to the railway stations. This was a secondary duty to his role of running the London District staff car pool of Rolls-Royces and Daimlers and — most significantly — deciding daily to whom cars should be allotted, and which models.

After Oxford, where he read English, Wainwright in 1952 joined the *Evening News*, which had the largest circulation of the then three London evening newspapers. It was newspaper practice at the time to search for talent among

university students, particularly at Oxford and Cambridge, and Wainwright was recruited while still an undergraduate. He stayed with the paper variously as chief leader writer, feature writer, foreign correspondent, diary editor and travel editor for 22 years.

He then became the first professional journalist to be hired by the Social Science Research Council. He was appointed in 1954 to create an information division and to improve the council's presentation. However, Margaret Thatcher's Government soon questioned the *raison d'être* of the council, with Sir Keith Joseph, as Secretary of State for Education, reducing its budget by a quarter and

somewhat curiously changing its name to the Economic and Social Research Council.

At one time Wainwright was secretary of the Whitefriars Club, a dining club which met in the Cock Tavern in Fleet Street and brought together journalists and people in literary publishing. He was a popular figure in the old days of Fleet Street: generous, kind, hospitable and offering real help and guidance to young journalists who had won his patronage for one reason or another. There was only one short break, in the early 1960s, when he worked for the Council of Industrial Design and wrote for *Design* magazine, an appointment which was later to help him, both at the Social Science Research Council and in his last job as editor of publications for the European Science Foundation from 1987 to 1996.

Yet what mattered most to him were his books. Later in his life he wrote the stories of some of Britain's most interesting companies, including a history of Simpsons, the Piccadilly department store (with a foreword by the Duke of Edinburgh) in 1966. A passionate musicologist, he wrote histories of the British piano industry, *The Piano Makers* (1975), and specifically of John Broadwood and Sons, *Broadwood By Appointment* (1982). He also followed his other interests, writing, with Catherine Dinn, a beautifully produced art book about a late Victorian painter, Henry Scott Tuke, 1858-1928: *Under Canvas* (1989). He never married.

TAMARA GEVA

Tamara Geva, dancer and actress, died in New York on December 9 aged about 90. She was born in St Petersburg, probably in 1907.

TAMARA GEVA's career in the theatre spread across two continents and extended from ballet in St Petersburg, through musicals and straight plays in New York and London, to Hollywood films. Without doubt, however, what she will best be remembered for is the role of the crazy Russian ballerina Vera Baranovskaya which she created in the Rodgers and Hart show *On Your Toes*. This musical made theatrical history in 1936 by eliminating the chorus line and incorporating dance as an integral part of the drama.

George Balanchine made a big dance sequence for Geva to end each half. In the *Princess Zenobia* ballet, audiences tended only gradually to realise that it was a spoof (she said the laughter always began in the cheaper seats upstairs before spreading to the stalls). The more famous number, *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue*, included her solo take-off of the striptease dancer Gypsy Rose Lee, and a nightclub duet with the brilliantly funny Ray Bolger, in which a champagne bottle appeared mysteriously in the hands of first one partner, then the other, its passing cunningly hidden from the spectators.

Geva played the lead in the Broadway and Shaftesbury Avenue premieres of *On Your Toes*, but not in the film. That went to the younger, prettier Vera Zornitsa, who had become Balanchine's second wife. Geva was his first wife and at the time played a small but important part in his getting out of Russia to begin the career in the West that made him the greatest choreographer of this century.

She was born Tamara Zherverzhayeva in St Petersburg. Her mother had been a music-hall singer, and according to Geva she never lacked admirers, either before or after her marriage to Tamara's father, Levki Zherverzhayeva, which took place when the child was already six. He was half Tatar, half Turkish, a convert to Christianity but obliged to obey his Muslim father's objection to the match until he had inherited the family business: a



highly prosperous one manufacturing gold brocades and other costly textiles for ecclesiastical and imperial court use. He used his wealth to build up a private museum and theatre, and to support young artists, including Mayakovsky. This saved him after the Revolution, when both his wealth and his source attracted disapproval: he was arrested but released in response to a petition from many grateful artists. Thereafter he was allowed to be curator of the museum he had started.

He had long been taking his daughter to watch opera and ballet at the Maryinsky, but at first he opposed her wish to study dancing, and by the time he was reluctantly persuaded, she was past the entry age for the Theatre School in Rossi Street. She made excellent progress with good private teachers until able to take the evening course there. At the school she met Balanchine, who made her one of his partners in the experimental dances he was already making, notably in a notorious duet to Rubinstein's *Romanesque* where he supported her in an arabesque with only a kiss — no hands. Geva subsequently danced in Balanchine's Young Ballet group, and when the temporary closure of the school left him homeless, he moved to live with her family. Soon afterwards, they married. She was only 15; he was 18 and looking, she said, even more Byronically handsome than usual with black eyeshadow and his long

floppy hair. To sustain themselves they danced in privately arranged shows and even performed in nightclubs — she singing, he at the piano. They were paid usually in flour, salt or coffee (she liked coffee best because the grounds could be recycled for cake). In 1924 a singer, Vladimir Dimitriev, took Geva and Balanchine, along with Alexandra Danilova, Nicholas Efimoff and a few others, on a tour to Germany. The arrangements proved disastrous but they managed to find engagements in halls, summer theatres, beer gardens, even a lunatic asylum, before moving to London, where they played a fortnight in variety at the Empire, Leicester Square. (The management, however, did not take up the option of a second fortnight, because their costume-changes took too long.)

The group decided against returning to Russia, and made for Paris, but they found no more work and were at their wits' end when suddenly they received an invitation to audition for the Diaghilev Ballet. Anton Dolin, then the leading man, had seen them dance in London and recommended them. For Balanchine as choreographer and Danilova as ballerina it was the first step on distinguished international careers. Efimoff and Geva were engaged too, but she was given only small roles and found Balanchine too busy for their marriage to thrive. They broke up after a year, but

remained good friends for the rest of his life. After a further year, she left the company.

Geva now accepted an invitation to tour America as guest star with Nikita Balieff's *Chauve Souris* variety show: Balanchine made three contracted solos for her. When the company returned to Europe, she stayed in America and broke into musicals: her first success was a "strut on pointe" solo in Florenz Ziegfeld's *Whoopee*. Other shows followed, and in 1935 she made a brief return to ballet, dancing the lead in Balanchine's *Errand* for the opening programme of the American Ballet — the forerunner of New York City Ballet.

After the big hit of *On Your Toes*, Geva decided there was more future in straight theatre. After some mediocre parts, her breakthrough came when Robert Sherwood saw her in a summer production of his *Idiot's Delight* and invited her to star in a London production of the play. Other plays she performed in ranged from *The Trojan Women* to Sartre's *No Exit* and Shaw's *Misalliance*. Her films were less memorable, but her choreography for *Le Spectre de la Rose* was admired, and so was her direction of a BBC television documentary of Diaghilev in 1979. Her colourful account of her early years, *Split Seconds*, was published in 1972.

A second husband predeceased her: she had no children.

PERSONAL COLUMN

FLATSHARE, FLIGHTS DIRECTORY, ANNOUNCEMENTS, CHILDREN ON DIALYSIS, LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES, RENTALS, FARESAVERS, UNITED STATES IMMIGRATION, THE RAF Rises to the Challenge, DELTA WORLDWIDE, JETLINE

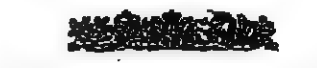
LORD BADEN-POWELL O.M.

The origin of the Boy Scout movement, though it has been a matter of some controversy, is simple enough. Always fond of boys and interested in their welfare, and having raised a small corps of boy messengers in Mafeking, Baden-Powell on his return to England became much in request to inspect various schools' cadet corps and boys' brigades. Having some years before written 'Aids to Scouting' for the instruction of soldiers, it was natural that when addressing these boys he should have suggested that they might well study the subjects contained therein. His own scouting adventures appealed to them, the book was eagerly read by numbers of boys, and the author decided to compile a book specially for their use.

He then recognized that, while mere scouting might form an attractive amusement, the subject might well be extended and developed both into a pastime and into a serious system of education. By such means real disci-

ON THIS DAY

January 9, 1909



Had Baden-Powell remained in the Army he might well have risen to field marshal, according to his obituarist in 1941. Instead, he chose, with encouragement from King Edward VII, to form the Boy Scout movement

pline could be instilled, and with this could be combined the principles of chivalry and patriotism. But to make it attractive to young minds it was necessary to combine such ideals with games and sham adventures. Red Indians and backwoodsman always have a fascination for boys; accordingly tracking, hunting, camping and so on, were made to form the basis of this educational system. Another idea which had much to do with the success of the movement was that of dressing the boys

in a distinctive uniform which was at once practical, picturesque and yet cheap and the system was adopted of giving badges as certificates of competency in various subjects. Meanwhile, the 'Chief Scout' had organised a small corps of 'Boys Scouts' and in July, 1907, had taken them to camp on Brownsea Island, in Poole Harbour. So successful did this experiment prove to be, and so salutary to the boys, that more extended operations were decided upon. It was now evident that much good might come of this movement. The original idea grew into something more grand and ambitious. From merely being a pastime it became a means of enlarging the minds of the boys. They learnt to make themselves useful, not only to themselves but to others. They were shown how to develop themselves physically and morally. It became a system of chivalry, almost a religion. So keenly did all classes of boys take the matter up that it has become a source of incalculable good to the nation and later to other nations all over the world.

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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

FRIDAY JANUARY 9 1998

Asian turmoil may hit US growth

By JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS EDITOR

AMERICAN growth could suffer a significant hit from the Asian crisis, removing the need for any further rise in US interest rates, according to an influential Federal Reserve Board governor.

In a speech on the economic outlook this year, Laurence Meyer, regarded as one of the Fed's more hawkish members, said that growth could be reduced by as much as 0.75 per cent because of continuing turmoil in Asia.

"A slowdown of such a magnitude could be expected to substitute for some or all of the monetary tightening that otherwise might have been justified," he said.

This is the most overt statement so far of US concerns about the deflationary impact of the Asian crisis and a significant hint that thinking on interest rates within the Fed has

shifted. Mr Meyer said that without the impact of Asia, falling US unemployment — to a 24-year low of 4.6 per cent in November — would have supported the case for a rise in US rates late last year.

"But, at that very time, the growing dimension of the Asian turmoil began to cast a shadow over the forecast for 1998," said Mr Meyer, whose remarks coincided with fresh

evidence that the American economy is decelerating. Producer prices unexpectedly fell 0.2 per cent in December and first-time jobless claims jumped by more than forecast.

The US Treasury bond market, already booming on anticipation of deflationary effects from Asia, rallied on hopes that the next move in US rates will be a cut. Shares were depressed by Asian wor-

ries. In early afternoon trade, the Dow Jones industrial average was quoted 87.69 points lower at 7,815.58.

Meanwhile, gold prices slumped again to an 18½-year low of \$281.65 an ounce at the London fix, providing another strand to the debate about impending global deflation.

Increasing public debate in America about the deflationary impact of the Far East

economies came against a background of deepening crisis in Asia with Indonesia becoming the latest victim of the crash of confidence.

The rupiah slumped 18 per cent to a record low of 9,900 against the dollar. The stock market also plunged 18 per cent at its worst point. It closed down 11.95 per cent at 347.11.

Indonesian markets lost their composure after America re-

acted negatively, and in public to the country's budget plans unveiled this week.

Larry Summers, US Deputy Treasury Secretary, said on Wednesday that Indonesia needed to show its commitment to reforms agreed as part of the International Monetary Fund's rescue in October.

Fitch IBCA, the credit rating agency, yesterday downgraded Indonesia's long-term for-

ign currency rating. It said: "The tabling of unrealistic budget proposals which publicly flout recently agreed targets with the International Monetary Fund is a severe blow to confidence."

Later in the day, Standard & Poor's cut Thailand's long-term debt and foreign currency ratings, citing "the deepening financial crisis that is stifling Thailand's growth prospects".

Meanwhile, South Korea was engaged in another round of crisis talks with leading international banks in a continuing effort to persuade them to roll over huge short-term loans. Lee Kyung-shick, Governor of the Bank of Korea, made a lightning tour of Paris and London and was due in Frankfurt today in an effort to whip up support from the European bankers.

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BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET	YTD
FTSE 100	5237.1 (+13.0)
Yield	3.10%
FTSE All share	2457.54 (+5.08)
Nikkei	15019.18 (+8.92)
New York	7829.03 (-73.24)
Dow Jones	588.14 (-4.89)
S&P Composite	

3-MO	6-MO	1-YR
Federal Funds	5.75%	(5.75%)
Long Bond	103.75%	(104.75%)
Yield	5.75%	(6.75%)

3-MO	6-MO	1-YR
3-MO LIBOR	7.75%	(7.75%)
Libor long	128.75%	(128.75%)
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MoD police raid Amey subsidiary head office

By JON ASHWORTH

THE facilities management arm of Amey, the construction group, has been raided by Ministry of Defence police investigating suspected irregularities involving maintenance contracts.

Amey Facilities Management (AFM), which is based in Maidenhead, Berkshire, has launched an internal inquiry into the affair, which is understood to involve work done for the MoD at one particular base.

Facilities management is worth about £200 million a year to Amey, which is contracted to the MoD on road, maintenance, building services and similar work.

The development heralds unwelcome publicity for Amey, which is headed by Brian Staples who was ousted last year as chief executive of United Utilities. Mr Staples is suing United Utilities for alleged wrongful dismissal and claiming damages that could exceed £2 million.

Amey has been adept at securing public sector contracts, including roads and railways, along with the man-

agement of MoD property. The MoD police fraud squad raided the AFM head office in November after obtaining warrants under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act.

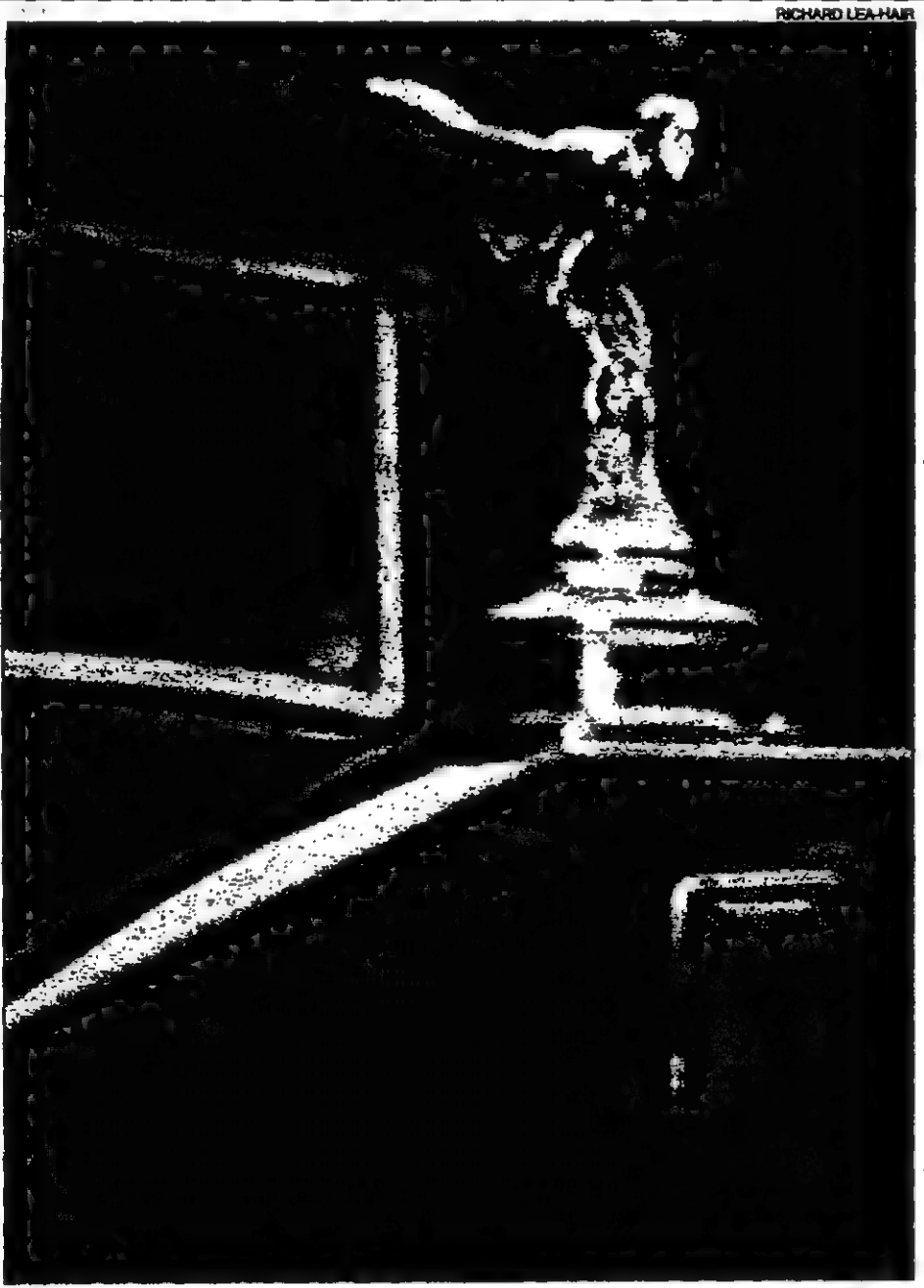
Documents and computer software were seized. The homes of AFM employees were also raided. Copies were made and the material was later returned.

The MoD said that suspicions were raised during routine checks although some believe that the action is the result of a "grudge" by a rival contractor.

Investigators are looking into suspected irregularities in an area of contract management. The investigation is at an early stage and no arrests have been made.

AFM has launched an internal review and commissioned an independent audit from outside consultants.

Bill Latta, AFM's managing director, said that the company would co-operate fully with the MoD and expected to be fully exonerated. The company continues to be invited to tender by the MoD.



Michael Shrimpton yesterday called on Rolls owners to defend the honour of the Silver Lady

R-R owners and dealers meet to bid for marque

By ADAM JONES

ROLLS-ROYCE enthusiasts were asked to defend the honour of the Silver Lady yesterday by a group of owners who want to arrange a bid for the luxury carmaker to keep it in British hands.

An action committee of Rolls-Royce and Bentley owners met for the first time near Northampton, with some travelling from as far afield as Scotland and Finland. The committee wants to raise enough UK money to buy Rolls-Royce Motors from under the nose of BMW, widely seen as the most likely buyer after Rolls-Royce was put up for auction by Vickers last year.

The committee, led by Michael Shrimpton, a barrister, is backed by the Rolls-Royce enthusiasts club. It is seeking to exploit the legendary network of Rolls-Royce owners, and has already received donations for a "fighting fund".

The bulk of any bid money would be more likely to come from other sources. Bernie Ecclestone, the Formula One chief, has been approached; Mr Shrimpton is also sounding out venture capitalists.

Vickers maintains that only a dedicated carmaker can own Rolls-Royce successfully because of the scale of investment needed, making a foreign sale seem inevitable. Mr Shrimpton said it was not necessary for Rolls-Royce to be sold overseas.

however. "Vickers underestimates the extent of technical expertise available in this country."

The meeting was held at Paulerspury, the site of the Sir Henry Royce Memorial Foundation. In dusty sales ledgers the Queen rubs shoulders with Elvis Presley, John Lennon and Jayne Mansfield.

Not all the owners present yesterday had strong feelings about German ownership. One admitted bringing his vintage car to swell numbers for the TV cameras and press.

Sales of Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars climbed for the fourth year in a row last year. Vickers said a total of 1,918 were sold, compared with 1,744 in 1996.

Slaughter

Guinness has been good for Slaughter and May, the City law firm, which emerged as the top legal adviser on UK public takeovers in 1997. The firm advised on the £9.6 billion Diageo merger. Page 26

Upmarket

Upmarket stores were emerging as the victors of the Christmas shopping season yesterday as two retail chains gave evidence that customers are "trading up" by saving money for more expensive goods. Page 27

Treves wins Channel 4 post

By RAYMOND SNOOD, MEDIA EDITOR

VANNI TREVES, the Italian-born senior partner at Macfarlanes, the City law firm, is to become the next chairman of Channel 4. He beat off competition from Sir Colin Southgate, chairman of EMI, who had been lobbying strongly for the post.

Mr Treves, 57, will take over from Sir Michael Bishop, the chairman of British Midland, whose five-year term of office ended ten days ago.

He is the choice of the Independent Television Commission (ITC), the body which regulates commercial television and which chooses the chairman of the 15-year-old

channel. The ITC has sent its recommendation to Chris Smith, Secretary of State for National Heritage, who is understood to have approved the choice. An announcement is expected next week.

Mr Treves, who is married with three children, was born in Florence and arrived here more than 50 years ago, speaking not a word of English. His father was killed fighting for the Allies in the battle to liberate Florence in 1944.

His firm, Macfarlanes, looks after Richard Branson's family trusts and Mr Treves acts personally for John Paul Getty II, the billionaire.

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His firm, Macfarlanes, looks after Richard Branson's family trusts and Mr Treves acts personally for John Paul Getty II, the billionaire.

Araskog to receive \$175m as ITT yields to takeover

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

RAND ARASKOG, the ITT chairman who had fought tooth and nail to stay in charge of the US hotel and entertainment group, will receive more than \$175 million (£110 million) after agreeing to the \$13.7 billion takeover by Starwood Lodgings scheduled to be completed next month.

According to documents filed at the Securities & Exchange Commission, ITT will take a \$750 million charge against profits in connection with the takeover. Some \$350

million will be used to pay for directors' share options. ITT declined to detail individual payouts but confirmed that Mr Araskog will receive at least half of the \$350 million.

An ITT spokesman said: "It's really a clearing of the deck to allow Starwood to embark with a clean sheet." He said the charge could rise another 10 per cent.

The write-off includes \$175 million for the firing of ITT employees and \$110 million for the early retirement of

debits. Costs from fighting off a hostile bid from Hilton Hotels totalled \$34 million.

Mr Araskog and Steven Bollenbach, the Hilton chairman, had fought what was said to have been the dirtiest US takeover battle of 1996. Mr Araskog's steadfastness drove up the bid price per share from \$55 to \$82.

Starwood will be the world's largest hotel group with 650 properties after the acquisition. Trust invasion, page 29

Coal crisis takes Mandelson underground

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

PETER MANDELSON will today take time off from his work on the Millennium Dome to go down a coal mine. He will meet Richard Budge, chief executive of RJB Mining, and Yorkshire miners as the Government attempts to map out an energy policy

and looks at plans for the long-term future of the coal industry.

The presence of the Government's chief policy co-ordinator and Tony Blair's right-hand adviser at Kellingley colliery near Wakefield, will send clear signals that the future of coal is being determined at the highest level. Mr Mandelson will go underground at Kellingley with Mr

Budge and John Grogan, the MP for Selby. Afterwards he will talk to miners at the pit, which is one of RJB's larger collieries. The visit is outside the general duties of the Minister Without Portfolio, currently preoccupied with plans for the Millennium Dome in Greenwich.

Mr Budge is expected to press Mr Mandelson on the urgency needed to

set out a future for coal, in which the UK has abundant reserves. Mr Mandelson moved to play a role in the coal controversy a few months ago. At an emergency debate on industry, which stands to lose up to eight pits and 5,000 jobs because of reduced contracts from the electricity generators, he sat beside John Battle, the Energy Minister. The Prime

Minister then swiftly removed the issue from the Department of Trade and Industry — putting Richard Cabor, Minister for the Regions, in charge of an action plan and directing Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster General, to implement part of it.

A spokesman for RJB said the company welcomed the interest Mr Mandelson was showing.

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National Power leads venture in Zimbabwe

By Christine Buckley
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

NATIONAL POWER is to put more than £240 million into Southern Africa's first substantial independent power project.

The UK's largest generator will take the lead in a £925 million joint venture in Zimbabwe with the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority and Rio Tinto Zimbabwe. It will take a stake of 60 per cent to 80 per cent in the equity of the coal-fired power station. Equity will make up 30 per cent of the costs at the Gokwe North station in northwest Zimbabwe. The investment is the latest in a long run of international developments by the generator, which has now spent more than £1 billion overseas.

Keith Henry, chief executive, said: "Zimbabwe currently imports a substantial proportion of its electricity from neighbouring utilities to meet its growing needs. The Gokwe North power project could produce around a third of the country's power demand and act as a catalyst for further growth and regional development."

National Power expects to invest in further projects in Southern Africa. The company made £67 million from overseas operations in the first six months of its financial year and expects that figure to double in the full year.



John Baker, left, chairman, and Keith Henry, chief executive, of National Power, which has invested £1 billion overseas and expects to back more projects

Slaughter and May tops City table of takeover legal teams

By Jon Ashworth

GUINNESS has been good for Slaughter and May, the City law firm, which emerged as the top legal adviser on UK public takeovers in 1997.

Advising on the £9.8 billion merger of Guinness and Grand Metropolitan (now Diageo) helped Slaughter and May to head the annual league table compiled by *Acquisitions Monthly*. The other three law

firms involved — Theodore Goddard, Norton Rose and SJ Berwin — took the top slots among advisers to companies, relegating Linklaters & Paines from first to fifth place.

Slaughter and May also topped the wider league of legal advisers working for financial advisers or companies on UK public takeovers. It worked on 32 deals worth a combined £19.6 billion in 1997. In addition to

being the sole legal adviser to GrandMet in the merger, the firm also acted for Williams Holdings in its £1.3 billion takeover of Chubb Security and advised Energy Group in the attempted takeover by PacificCorp of America.

The City earned an estimated £1.3 billion in fees from UK takeovers in 1997, of which law firms won £400 million. Allen & Overy is ranked second to

Slaughter and May. It worked on 12 deals worth £12.2 billion, including acting for Cable & Wireless Communications on its £1 billion merger with Nynex CableComms.

Linklaters & Paines took third place in the wider league, advising on 33 deals worth £11.9 billion. Newcomers include an American firm, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, which worked on five UK public deals worth a combined

£3.6 billion. Philip Healey, editor of *Acquisitions Monthly*, said: "Until now US law firms have not made the same impact as their investment banking cousins. Maybe this is the start of a big push."

Freshfields slipped one place to fourth in the wider league, followed by Norton Rose (up from 11), SJ Berwin, Theodore Goddard, Herbert Smith, and Ashurst Morris Crisp. Clifford Chance was tenth.

Spring Ram £3m disposal near

By Chris Avray

SPRING RAM, the troubled bedrooms and kitchens group, yesterday said it expected to complete the £3 million disposal of its Rest Assured beds brand by the end of January.

The company, whose shares have collapsed from 130p to 17p since 1993, is selling the division for cash to

Silentnight, the UK's biggest beds group. The deal is part of a £42 million disposal programme which has included the recent sales of Crosby Doors, Merewoods Cabinets, GT Rackstraw and a ten-acre property at Birstall, Leeds.

Martin Towers, finance director, said: "Rest Assured is essentially a non-core business for us, because we're

mainly involved in kitchens, bedrooms and sinks. Its got a very attractive brand name, modern facilities and located in West Yorkshire, the centre of bed making. So it's a very useful combination for Silentnight."

He added that the cash raised from the sale would be used to help to reduce gearing, which is expected to be cut

from nearly 80 per cent to just 20 per cent after the disposal programme.

Mr Towers said the company is still recovering from its troubles in 1995, when it was hit by rising raw materials prices and the loss of a contract with B&Q. He added: "During 1997 the market was patchy, and there were good months and bad months."

A separate league shows accountants stealing a march on the merchant banks when it comes to private transactions. KPMG Corporate Finance advised on 236 private deals worth £2.8 billion in 1997, followed by Coopers & Lybrand (137 deals worth £1.7 billion) and Ernst & Young (115 deals worth £1.4 billion).

The accountants have yet to make any significant inroads with respect to public company takeovers, where the sector remains dominated by the big merchant banks.

TOURIST RATES		
	Bank	Bank
	Buyer	Seller
Australia \$	2.62	2.48
Austria Sch	27.84	18.98
Belgium Fl	63.75	65.70
Canada C\$	2.440	2.522
Cyprus Cyp£	0.904	0.832
Denmark Kr	11.78	10.87
Finland Mk	8.44	8.89
France Fr	16.25	9.51
Germany DM	3.10	2.98
Greece Dr	490	461
Hong Kong \$	12.25	12.15
Iceland	129	120
Ireland P£	1.25	1.15
Israel Sh	8.14	8.40
Italy Lit	3382	2825
Japan Yen	259.25	211.70
Netherlands Gld	3.678	3.571
Norway Kr	3.498	3.203
New Zealand \$	2.69	2.76
Norway Kr	12.08	11.74
Portugal Esc	312.23	280.80
Spain Ptas	200.79	241.50
Sweden Kr	12.77	12.87
Switzerland Fr	2.58	2.51
Taiwan N\$	34.973	32.924
Turkey Lira	1.723	1.580

Notes: For tourist information bank rates only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

National Savings cuts rates for new savers

NATIONAL SAVINGS yesterday reduced interest rates on new sales of five-year bonds and Savings Certificates, despite failing to attract enough savers with its products last year. Rates on five different investments are being reduced by between 0.25 and 0.5 per cent for all new customers. The announcement comes just two months after it was revealed that lacklustre sales at National Savings had forced Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, to cut the agency's funding target by a third to £2 billion.

In March last year it was estimated that National Savings would contribute £3 billion to the Exchequer in 1997-1998. However, National Savings failed to appeal to investors who found better rates elsewhere and the target had to be cut. National Savings said the reduction in medium term interest rates meant it was making the cuts "in keeping with changes in the market". Fixed interest and index linked certificates have been reduced to 5 per cent and 2.5 per cent plus RPI respectively, while pensioners bonds have dropped to 6.5 per cent and capital bonds have fallen to 6.25 per cent gross.

Goode Durrant up 14%

A FIRMER rental market drove Goode Durrant's first-half profits 14 per cent higher, to £17.4 million. Turnover of the vehicle and equipment hire group rose 36 per cent, to £95.5 million, in the six months to October 31. Michael Waring, chairman, said the company is still seeking to expand through organic growth, and occasional acquisitions. Earnings per share rose 17 per cent, to 21.7p. The interim dividend rises 17 per cent, to 3.75p. In September, Durrant bought Transport Development Group for £28.2 million.

Pearson Net widens

PEARSON, the media and entertainment group that owns the *Financial Times*, said it was bringing all its electronic publishing activities for business under one roof. The move would make the FT.com website the hub for the electronic delivery of *Financial Times* content and the specialised company, general news and financial data provided by FT Profile and other FT information services. The company said yesterday that substantial elements of the expanded FT.com would be subscription based.

Coda losses continue

SHARES in Coda, the information technology group, fell from 144p to 126p yesterday after it announced a pre-tax loss of £1.9 million (£4.9 million loss) for the year to October 31. Losses per share were 7.4p (18.5p). Once again directors are not recommending the payment of a dividend. Coda blames an increasingly competitive US market and skilled staff shortages for the poor results. It aims to return to profitability in 1998 with the outlook hopeful after the continued growth in revenue from Client Server financial applications.

Confident Heiton up 27%

HEITON HOLDINGS, the builder's merchant based in Dublin and London, announced interim pre-tax profit up 27 per cent to £66.2 million (£5.1 million). Turnover rose 17 per cent to £1,594.2 million in the half year to October 31, while earnings per share were up 27 per cent to 8.22p. Directors, who announced an interim dividend of 2.10p, up 27 per cent over last year, said the outlook is positive with expected growth in the construction market likely to reach 10 per cent in 1998, and the Irish economy expected to remain strong.

Abbey doubles profit

ABBEY, the Irish housebuilder, more than doubled pre-tax profit from £1,535.56 million (£3 million) to £1,756.56 million in the half year to October 31. Earnings per share increased to 13.08p (6.16p), from which comes an interim dividend of 3p, a rise of 36 per cent. Housebuilding sales rose, with 378 completed sales and a turnover of £1,532.75 million generating an operating profit of £1,535.56 million. Abbey Engineers, the company's plant hire business, reported an operating profit of £1,855,000 on turnover of £1,657.1 million.

Cobham acquisitions

COBHAM, the defence group, has acquired Nural Technologies for £3.4 million cash and certain microwave product lines of Premier Microwave Corporation for £1.1 million cash. The manufacture of these products, together with existing customer contracts worth £1.5 million, will be transferred to the group's Chelton Communication Systems. Last month, Chelton acquired Nural as well as Premier Microwave's business in passive microwave components. It said that the necessary regulatory approvals had been obtained.

Babcock wins contract

BABCOCK INTERNATIONAL has won a contract worth more than £30 million to refit HMS Southampton, the type 42 destroyer. The company said work would start at Rosyth on Monday and last until spring 1999. Up to 450 people will be employed during the refit, which will include the maintenance, overhaul and repair of the ship's hull and all main systems and equipment. Also included in the package are enhancements and updates to weapons, communications and command and control systems.

Unisys and PCs

UNISYS, the US technology group, is to discontinue the manufacture of personal computers and will source them from other manufacturers. This move will cost the group \$125 million (£77.5 million). The company is also going to write off the goodwill from the mergers of Sperry and Burroughs, which created Unisys in 1986.

AT&T set to acquire Teleport

FROM OLIVER AUGUST
IN NEW YORK

AT&T, the largest US phone group, is expected to announce the acquisition of Teleport, a regional phone company, for \$11 billion (£6.5 billion).

The deal is said to be scheduled for announcement today after an AT&T board meeting yesterday. Teleport and AT&T declined to confirm reports of the acquisition.

A Teleport takeover had been rumoured for weeks and its share price soared 20 per cent. The reported \$50 per share that AT&T will pay for Teleport is 7 per cent below Wednesday's close. Analysts have called the deal a "take-under".

The acquisition will be driven by the ambition of all long-distance carriers to enter the regional phone market. Teleport serves business customers in 28 US states. This leaves AT&T still looking for a regional acquisition to get into the household market. The long-distance carriers were permitted to enter regional markets by the 1996 Telecommunications Act but the regional companies are still fighting legal battles to enter the long-distance market.

Peregrine stake at a discount

By Richard Miles
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

PEREGRINE, the Hong Kong investment bank, is today expected to disclose that it is selling shares once worth \$200 million (£123 million) to Zurich Group, the Swiss financial services group, at a significant discount.

Trading in Peregrine shares has been suspended since Wednesday afternoon, when the investment bank announced that it was discussing a revision of the original terms of the share sale with Zurich.

Shares in the bank lost 14 per cent of their value before suspension, accentuating a decline in the stock price since mid-1997.

Its shares dropped sharply in the autumn on talk — that it had suffered heavy losses when the Hang Seng went into reverse.

Peregrine cited the continued drop in South-East Asian currencies and the recent downgrading of the credit ratings of Indonesian and South Korean companies as the main reasons behind the latest price cut.

Anglo American faces legal fight in Zairean copper row

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN JOHANNESBURG

ANGLO AMERICAN CORP, the South Africa mining giant, is denying charges that it conspired against a US rival's bid for copper riches in the former Zaire.

America Mineral Fields filed a \$3 billion (£1.84 billion) suit in a Texas court earlier this week alleging that Anglo had interfered with the company's agreements in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Anglo yesterday denied any allegations of wrongdoing.

The legal battle erupted barely a week after President Kabila of the Congo and Gecamines, the state mining agency, cancelled a tender for the Kolwezi project in Katanga province. This would have

reclaimed valuable minerals from previously mined waste.

AMF, based in Arkansas, said: "America Mineral Fields believes that Anglo American has for some time orchestrated a well-financed campaign to interfere with the company projects."

One mining analyst said: "I don't see how legal proceedings filed in Texas can affect a company with no operations in the United States."

The Kolwezi mine workings hold about 1.44 million tonnes of copper and 275,000 tonnes of cobalt worth about \$10 billion. In the final days of the civil war in Zaire, foreign mine concerns rushed to secure deals with Mr Kabila's

fighters. The former Zaire was one of the world's top copper-cobalt producers, with annual production as high as 475,000 tonnes of copper and 17,000 tonnes of cobalt in the Eighties. But under the rule of Mobutu Sese Seko Konde Ngbendu the mine output fell to between 10 and 20 per cent of former levels.

Jean-Raymond Boulic, AMF's co-founder, signed a \$1 billion deal with the rebels last April to buy the "tailings" project, beating several South African competitors, including Anglo American, Gencor and Iscor.

At the time, Anglo American complained that the tender process had not been allowed to run its course.

Subsequent talks between AMF and Mr Kabila's Government to ratify the deal dragged on for months, fueling gossip that the company was losing its grip on the site.

Last week, Gecamines cancelled the tender, saying that the Government had expected substantial up-front payments. Analysts speculated that the cash-strapped Congo Government had ended the process in hopes of getting a better deal.

Several leading mining companies, including Billiton and JCI said this week they remained interested in the tailings project. But Anglo American said it did not intend to submit a bid.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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Allied Te possible

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Majestic Win with Christ

JOHN APPEL... who gave up... ners empire... and forewa... ed an era... £22 million... already... Majestic... Share in... house corp... which are... Apple's me... after a sad... drinking... the sale... November... Investors... by M... because... investment... buyback... at only... 1996. Maj... recently... purchase... den's form... Mr Apple... into the... retirement... Tony de... Majestic...

The material girl grows up



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

The members of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee should be applauded for their restraint. No matter how much it disappointed some currency speculators, their decision to leave interest rates untouched was the right one. In fact, it was so clearly correct that it is hard to imagine how they all filled the hours during which they were supposed to be debating the issue of whether or not to use the single power in their possession.

Perhaps they passed the time swapping notes on the Christmas presents they gave and received. This might have provided entertaining anecdotal evidence of the indulgences of an elite bunch of economists but could hardly have been relied upon as a guide to the nation's spending patterns.

This more prosaic picture came from the CBI yesterday and it demonstrated just why there is no need for the MPC to slap on an extra quarter per cent to quell a spending surge. The bullish headlines from the CBI's survey of retailers were rapidly belied by a glimpse below the surface. While 54 per cent of respondents reported sales last month up on December 1996, 19 per cent reported a downturn.

In the way that statisticians view these things, that leaves a positive balance of 35 per cent. Pessimists would also discern that it leaves 27 per cent confessing that December sales

were static. Companies that have so far chosen to come forward and offer the City a glimpse of their Christmas trading results have been drawn from the happy 54 per cent, although the rich variety of bases on which their boasts rest make comparisons not only odious but impossible. Yesterday's crop of trading statements covered periods ranging from 48 weeks, at JJB Sports, to 5 weeks at TJ Hughes.

All, however, were reporting significant sales gains. We have yet to hear from the static 27 per cent, let alone the negative 19 per cent. Next week some of them may step forward. The January sales appear to be bringing bumper business to some stores, but analysts suspect that this may only enforce the December results, with the gap between winners and losers widening.

They are wary of Argos, seemingly squeezed by a revitalised Woolworths at the toy end of its business, and a revitalised Signet at the jewellery counters. And they tend towards weepiness at the mere mention of Laura Ashley. Although the share price indicates that investors believe House of Fraser enjoyed a good

Christmas, an unseemly rush to unfestive discounting before the holiday has raised some doubts.

Customers are being cautious, not demonstrating the level of extravagance which would have justified action from the MPC. It is not the end of the material girl but, perhaps, her elevation to sensible adulthood. Retailers have to learn to offer her value. And, for the time being, the MPC has to continue to practice self-restraint.

Smog from IMF chokes Indonesia

Like a bush fire generating its own winds, the Asian currency collapse is moving about erratically, erupting first in one country, then another, leaving burned markets and charred economies in its wake. As the panic of autumn regains strength in the new year, the International Monetary

Fund itself has now emerged as the most worrying participant in this conflagration.

Instead of acting like a central bank, helping to calm short-term hysteria, the increasingly pyromaniac institution has become an agent of instability. Its officials are handing extra supplies of matches to speculators, instead of helping to turn the water cannon on them.

This week's chosen victim for global humiliation is Indonesia. During decades of profitable expansion there, the West found it convenient to ignore the sheer unpleasantness of Indonesia's Government. Suddenly Washington, long defender of the politically indefensible, has become a nipping financial prosecutor.

The rupiah has lost three quarters of its value on the foreign exchanges since July, accelerating downhill crazily this week. Stock prices have melted down and citizens are stripping

the shelves of Jakarta supermarkets of staples and of imports for fear of total collapse.

At this point, leaks from the IMF make it clear that officials are dissatisfied with the budget presented by ageing President Suharto and may not release the next tranche of Indonesia's borrowing facility. The budget does not appear to guarantee the surplus of 1 per cent of national income that the IMF now prescribes as the cure for recession; nor is the notorious Indonesian establishment keen enough to bankrupt banks and companies that have lost so heavily because of the rupiah's speculative devaluation.

Both South Korea and Thailand are now trying to renegotiate the IMF loan agreements they signed in extremis. As recent heavy sales of "red chips" suggest, it seems just as likely that the bush fires will at last attack China via Hong Kong. Even without this, the IMF's

triumphalist strategy is beginning to singe its own authors. But that is actually the most helpful sign. The US Federal Reserve is already inclined to shelve intended interest rate rises because of the impact of emerging Asia's woes. The whiff of deflation is spreading West. The sooner and more positively the West responds, the better.

Books show way for pills and potions

Can it be less than a decade since the battle of the Net Book Agreement erupted? Today, titles are routinely sold at discounted prices and yet the publishing industry has not been forced to restrict itself to the disheartening business of disseminating the works of Dame Barbara Cartland and Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare. Despite the terrifying warnings from the voices of vested interest, the abolition of the anachronistic NBA did not carry a death sentence for good literature or special interest tomes.

Although it was only last March that the Restrictive Practices Court finally outlawed the price-fixing agreement, it had

disintegrated long before that as Terry Mahers' ill-fated Panos, later joined by Asda, bravely encouraged others to defy the publishers' outdated efforts at dictatorship. Archie Norman knows how to strike the right populist note for a supermarket, even if he is still struggling to find a voter-friendly tone for the Tories. Standing up for the customer against the might of the pharmaceutical giants is a winner. Now that the Office of Fair Trading has launched proceedings in the Restrictive Practices Court to outlaw resale price maintenance on over-the-counter drugs, Archie is heading for another victory.

Manufacturers of pills and potions do not need the protection of price fixing, and those who buy them certainly do not need to shell out what Asda estimates is an extra £300 million a year because of RPM.

GEC shrinks again

ANOTHER day, another GEC disposal, this time grossing £100 million for some distribution businesses in English-speaking markets and not quite in the GEC-Alsthom league. There is still no sign of the positive counterpart to this strategy, still less of the streetwise opportunism that deserted GEC in Lord Weinstock's later years. Perhaps action is being delayed because Lord Simpson has yet to impress investors or win their confidence.



Sweet smell of success: Philip Newton saw Perfume Shop sales rise 20 per cent over the last quarter of the year.

Shoppers opt for top end of market

By FRASER NELSON AND JENNIFER HANAWALD

UPMARKET stores were emerging as the victors of the Christmas shopping season yesterday as two retail chains gave evidence that customers are "trading up" by saving money for expensive goods.

Signet, the jewellery chain, and Merchant Retail, the perfume and department stores group, returned strong like-for-like Christmas sales growth yesterday — after a slow start to December gave way to a last-minute rush.

Shares of Signet made their sharpest one-day rise for over a year yesterday after the H Samuel group said that US profits would overcome a lacklustre performance from H Samuel. James McAdam, chief executive, said the top end of the jewellery market was proving more lucrative than the H Samuel end — with Ernest

Jones underlying sales growth at 6.7 per cent against the 1 per cent of H Samuel.

He said: "The mass market end is fiercely competitive, and H Samuel has been held back by store refurbishment. But in the US, which makes 62 per cent of our sales, we are outstripping all our rivals."

Merchant Retail's network of perfume shops and department stores had a similarly strong Christmas with like-for-like sales up 14 per cent. Its Perfume Shop, where Philip Newton is chairman, enjoyed a 20 per cent sales rise over the last quarter of the year, but footings were more modest with 10 per cent growth.

Shares of general retail companies rose an average 0.5 per cent yesterday, as the City awaits reports next week from Boots, Kingfisher, Dixons, Sears and Argos.

Late spree adds to JJB advance

By FRASER NELSON

THERE was a sharp slowdown in the demand for sportswear in the week before Christmas, before an end-of-year rush that left the sector sharply ahead over 1997, according to JJB Sports.

The company said that its like-for-like sales grew 7.5 per cent in the last six weeks of 1997, against the 14 per cent growth achieved throughout the rest of the year.

The figures came as Hi-Tec Sports, the quoted sports shoes company, returned a 52 per cent jump in interim profits, making £1.21 million in the six months to October 31.

JJB shares fell 12½p to 667½p yesterday — having risen by 36p the day before — as some analysts felt disappointed with the profit margin lost by discounting to combat the fall in sales immediately

after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

David Greenwood, finance director, said its customers laid low after December 18 to wait for the sales.

He said: "The general public is getting more and more wise to the way the sales work, and this is why our pre-Christmas trading was a little behind expectations."

The company now had 400 stores across the UK, and intends to open 40 more edge-of-town superstores later this year. This will fuel sales growth, but analysts expect some time to pass before profits follow suit.

Hi-Tec is making an interim dividend of 0.6p, due on April 17, its shares gained a penny, returning to their 18-month high of 47½p.

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Allied Textiles receives possible buyout offer

By CHRIS AVRES

THE Stock Exchange is to look at share price movements in Allied Textiles, the clothing to airbags company that yesterday said that it was considering a possible management buyout offer.

John Carrin and Gerald Wightman, chief executive and finance director of Allied, are understood to be heading the buyout team, likely to be financed by Citicorp, the venture capitalist.

The takeover talks come only weeks after Allied's directors were fiercely criticised over the discovery of accounting irregularities at one of its sites. Allied, which yesterday said that it was "shocked, saddened and embarrassed" by the discovery,

saw its shares plunge 46p to 124p after the irregularities were revealed.

Yesterday, shares in Allied recovered 41½p to 165½p after the bid talks were disclosed. The Stock Exchange is known always to investigate such big share price movements, although it will not name individual companies.

Allied's chairman, Peter Honeysett, was unavailable for comment last night, although a company statement said: "Following initial discussions with the potential offeror, any such offer, if made, will require the involvement of certain of the executive directors. The board has,

therefore, appointed a committee comprising the independent directors of the company to consider any such offer, if made."

Allied has indicated that no police investigation is likely to be made into the accounting irregularities, and says that the managers responsible made no personal gain. The managers have not been named, although two of the four are still understood to be on Allied's staff.

Yesterday's statement also answered criticism by institutional shareholders who have claimed that Allied did not have an audit committee when the accounting problems occurred. It said: "The whole board

has always been and remains committed to the principles of corporate governance, that we do have an audit committee, which comprises the whole board, and that a detailed risk analysis had been carried out in normal course to establish the adequacy of our internal systems."

Allied also reported a 2.5 per cent rise in pre-tax profits for the year to September 30, from £16 million to £16.3 million, on turnover of £232 million, up 2 per cent from £227 million. Earnings per share rose 2 per cent, from 16.3p to 16.3p. A total dividend of 8.45p, up from 7.8p, will be paid.

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Majestic Wine sparkles with Christmas sales

By CHRIS AVRES

JOHN APTHORP, the tycoon who gave up his frozen dinners empire to sell champagne and fine wines, yesterday added an extra £2 million to the £22 million profit he has already made since floating Majestic Wine 14 months ago.

Shares in the wine warehouse company, 70 per cent of which are controlled by Mr Apthorp, rose 20p to 42½p after it said that Christmas drinking had lifted like-for-like sales 11 per cent during November and December.

Investors have been delighted by Majestic, which has become one of the Alternative Investment Market's best-performing stocks since floating at only 160p in November 1996. Majestic's sales have recently been boosted by the purchase of claret from Sweden's former state-owned drinks wholesaler.

Mr Apthorp, now 62, moved into the wine business as a retirement project after meeting Tony Mason, who joined Majestic as a director shortly



Tim How saw Majestic Wine's sales rise 11 per cent

after it was founded in 1980 in Wood Green, London.

Mr Mason left Majestic in the mid-eighties after seeing it make a disastrous expansion into the US. He then founded his own company, Wizard Wines, which was bought in 1987 by Bejam, the frozen food group owned by Mr Apthorp.

Two years later, Bejam was sold to Iceland, with Mr Apthorp, who made £60 million from the deal, keeping the wine division with Mr Mason.

In 1991 they bought Majestic, which had become a troubled business controlled by venture capitalists. The £25 million deal was backed by Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, the investment bank, with Mr Apthorp becoming chairman and Mr Mason head wine buyer. They appointed Tim How, a former Bejam employee, as chief executive.

Majestic has 69 stores and plans to open another 61 at a rate of eight a year.

LucasVarity buys brakes company

LUCASVARTY has paid £70.6 million for the 66 per cent of voting shares not already owned in Freios Varga, South America's largest brakes manufacturer. Shares in Lucas rose 6½p to 215½p in response.

Sales at Freios Varga for the nine months ended September 30, 1997, were £149 million with pre-tax profits of £10.7 million. Net assets were £62.6 million.

Freios Varga has been a joint venture partner of Lucas Industries since 1999. It produces light and heavy vehicle brake components, including ABS, calipers, rotors, drum brakes, corner modules, boosters and brake fluid, has 2,500 employees and manufacturing plants and technical centres in Brazil, Argentina and the US.

Victor Rice, chief executive of LucasVarity, said: "We are delighted with this acquisition. Through it we have secured a strong position in a significant growth market. The acquisition fits excellently with our strategy."

Public Notice

Issued by National Savings on behalf of HM Treasury

Interest Rate Changes

PENSIONERS BONDS

Series 3 Pensioners Bonds were withdrawn from sale on 8 January 1998. Series 4 will go on sale on 9 January. It will offer a guaranteed rate of 6.5% pa gross for the first five years held.

CAPITAL BONDS

Series J Capital Bonds were withdrawn from sale on 8 January 1998. Series K will go on sale on 9 January. It will offer a gross return of 6.25% pa compound, guaranteed when held for five years.

CHILDREN'S BONUS BONDS

Issue H Children's Bonus Bonds were withdrawn from sale on 8 January 1998. Issue I will go on sale on 9 January. It will offer a guaranteed and tax-free return of 6.25% pa compound when held for the first five years.

SAVINGS CERTIFICATES

National Savings Certificates of the 44th Issue and 11th Index-linked Issue were withdrawn from sale on 8 January 1998.

Fixed Interest Certificates

The 45th Issue will go on sale on 9 January. It will offer a guaranteed and tax-free return of 5.0% pa compound when held for five years.

Index-linked Certificates

The 12th Index-linked Issue will go on sale on 9 January. It will offer a guaranteed and tax-free return of 2.5% pa compound in addition to index-linking when held for five years.

INCOME BONDS

(previously announced 27 November 1997)

From 8 January 1998, the variable gross rates of interest have been increased from 6.75% pa to 7.0% pa on a holding up to £25,000 and from 7.0% pa to 7.25% pa on a holding of £25,000 or more.

If you require information on any of our products call 0645 645 000 (calls charged at local rate).

NATIONAL SAVINGS

Expect stability despite recent turmoil in Asia

The new year is only a week old, but already it has provided plenty of drama. Yet, despite the sensational events in Asia in the past few weeks, the biggest surprise of 1998 could be the stability of most economies and financial markets.

While events in Korea, Indonesia and Malaysia swing from tragedy to farce and back again with bewildering speed, the really important tragedy-comedy is being played out in Japan. Its \$4.6 trillion (\$2.8 trillion) economy produces twice as much wealth as China, Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Taiwan combined.

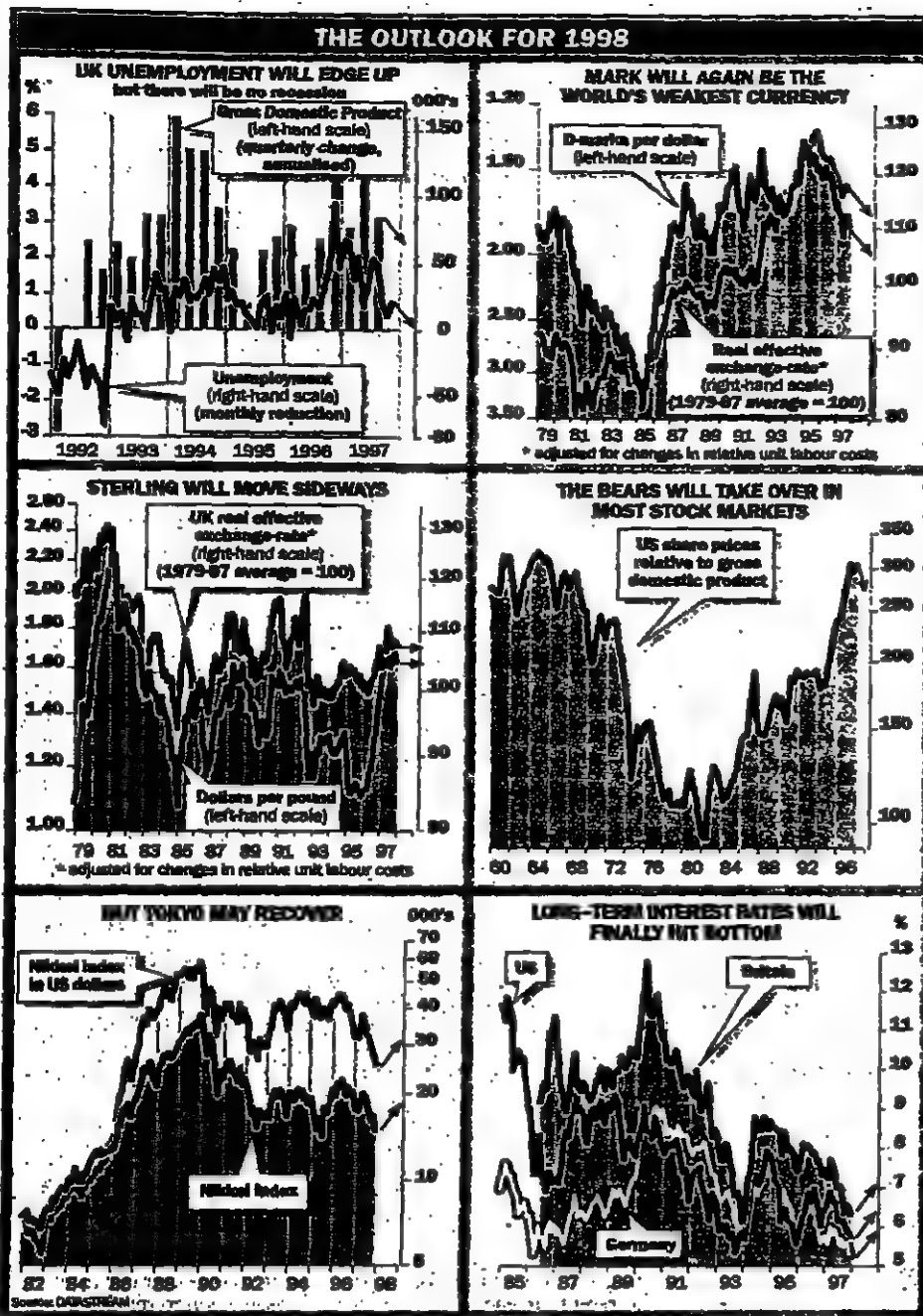
If Japan contributes to a solution of the Asian crisis — and here I come to the predictions I usually offer at this time of year — then 1998 could prove to be a surprisingly benign year for the world economy, despite the rocky start. If, on the other hand, Japan turns out to be part of the Asian problem, instead of part of the solution, then 1998 will be a year of hair-raising instability for financial markets and of serious economic dislocations around the globe.

With the stakes so high — and the American Administration now seemingly exerting strong pressure on the Japanese Government to come to its senses, the more likely outcome must surely be the benign one. At some point this year, Japan will vigorously reflate its economy. This will help to avert a 1930s-style depression across Asia and allow the rest of the world to enjoy another year of steady, if slightly disappointing, growth. The main question, however, is whether Japan will act quickly enough to prevent a banking crisis of monumental proportions, which would lead to huge currency misalignments, outbursts of protectionism and abandoned investment projects, forcing the central banks of America and Europe to cut interest rates sharply in the year ahead.

Ryutaro Hashimoto, Japan's Prime Minister, seemed intent on becoming his country's Herbert Hoover; he now seems to have undergone a change of heart. According to observers such as Richard Medley, the Washington economic consultant known for his close links with policymakers in Tokyo, Mr Hashimoto is on the point of creating a consensus in the Liberal Democratic Party and the Ministry of Finance in support of a huge package of cuts and public works projects worth about ¥10 trillion (equivalent to \$80 billion or 1.5 per cent of Japan's GDP). This would come on top of the small temporary tax cut, worth only ¥2 trillion announced before Christmas.

I am no expert on the byzantine intricacies of Japanese politics, but it does seem probable that the advocates of fiscal stimulus will eventually get their way — if only because the catastrophic consequences of pre-Keynesian fiscal conservatism have now become so obvious to the Japanese people, while Korea has presented an

Japan will reflate its economy, a Wall Street fall will take global shares down and sterling will hold its own



object lesson of how quickly and comprehensively a miracle economy can crumble to dust.

My first prediction for 1998, therefore, is that a big Keynesian package in Japan will revive its economy by the summer and will offset the global impact of the recession that is now inevitable in the rest of Asia. If I am right about this, the main surprise for other economies are likely to be in the direction of slightly stronger than expected growth.

In Britain and America growth will decelerate, but not by as much as most economists are now predicting. Consumer and business confidence remain high enough and international competitiveness remains strong enough to keep both countries on a satisfactory path of self-sustaining steady growth. In Europe, by contrast, the outlook is cloudier. Germany, in particular, will continue to suffer from uncompetitive labour costs and low consumer confidence. Its economy is too dependent on exports, especially of capital goods.

These will be hard hit by collapsing investment in Asia and also in Eastern Europe, which will suffer from cut-price Asian competition as well as financial difficulties. While Europe will certainly continue to recover, therefore, Germany may not enjoy the acceleration from 2.4 per cent to 3 per cent growth predicted by the OECD.

Turning to Britain, the OECD predicted in December, before the Korean meltdown, that Britain's GDP growth would decelerate from 3.4 per cent in 1997 to 2.2 per cent in 1998 in response to higher interest rates and the strong pound. I suspect that growth will be at least as strong as this and perhaps even a bit stronger, despite the problems in Asia. Nevertheless the slowdown — whether it is to 2.2 per cent or 2.5 per cent growth — should be sufficient to dissuade the Bank of England from raising British interest rates any further.

One factor likely to deter the Bank from tightening money

will be a modest rise in unemployment. With the strong pound maintaining the pressure on British companies to raise their productivity, I suspect that unemployment will rise as soon as the economy decelerates below 2.5 per cent growth. The first increase in monthly unemployment will cause big political problems for Labour and for Gordon Brown in particular, but it will also ensure that inflation remains under control. However, with the economy showing no sign of recession and global activity accelerating as the year proceeds, the Bank is unlikely to start cutting interest rates in the second half of the year as the markets are currently expecting. In fact, 1998 could be one of those rare years when British interest rates move neither up nor down — and if they do move, it is very unlikely to be by more than half a percentage point in either direction.

How would this neutral outlook for interest rates affect the pound? The present consensus on sterling is (as usual) bearish,

with most analysts predicting a depreciation to below DM2.70 by the end of the year. This bearishness may not prove as wrong as it has in the past two years, but I suspect that sterling will not weaken at all, at least against the German mark, since British growth and interest rates will prove slightly stronger than expected, while Europe is likely to disappoint the very optimistic expectations that have become prevalent. On balance, sterling should trade throughout the year in a fairly narrow band, perhaps rising just a little above DM3.

The mark should remain the world's weakest currency, not only because of Germany's high costs and economic weakness but also because of the Bundesbank's desire to get EMU off to a good start.

Contrary to the market view, a moderately weak mark would provide the best possible launching pad for the launch of EMU. Not only would it help to maintain economic growth throughout Europe, it would also ensure the competitiveness of the newly created euro and allow it to hold its own or even appreciate gently against the dollar after January 1999. To create these conditions, I would expect the dollar to rise by a further 10 per cent against the mark to about DM2. Whether the dollar or the yen will end up as the world's strongest currency in 1998 will depend on the strength of the Japanese recovery measures. My suspicion is that the yen will end up on top, in part because the present market consensus is so overwhelmingly bearish about Japan.

Turning to stock markets (which I hope to discuss in greater detail later this month), Asia again looms large. Wall Street is now clearly at an extreme valuation — a statement that could not validly be made until the middle of 1997. This means that present share prices can only be sustained by one of two factors — hopes of continuing rapid profit growth or expectations of lower interest rates. Both of these hopes are likely to be shattered in the months ahead: Asian competition will hit profits, while Japan's expansionary measures will obviate the hoped-for reduction in US interest rates. As it becomes clear that the world is not about to slide into deflation, the overvalued global bull market in bonds is also likely to come to an end.

The upshot is likely to be a substantial, though not catastrophic, fall in equities, with prices ending the year 20 or 30 per cent below the present level. If Wall Street falls, every European market (including London) will fall with it. The one exception will be Tokyo, which has always followed its own independent path.

If I am right about a U-turn in Japanese economic policy, Tokyo shares should prove the year's best investment. Unfortunately they will be the worst possible investment if my hunch about Japanese policy turns out to be wrong.

Invasion of the real estate investment trusts is under way

Dominic Walsh looks at the US phenomenon that is changing the face of the hotels sector

Turnberry, the Open Championship venue on the east coast of Scotland, has witnessed some of the world's classic golf matches. But on Christmas Eve it became the starting point for what is expected to turn into an invasion by the America's biggest real estate investment trusts.

While one such real estate investment trust (REIT), Starwood Lodging, was surprising the business world with its \$14 billion (\$8.6 billion) acquisition of TTT Corporation, Starwood, the company, quietly put out an announcement from its Phoenix headquarters to the effect that it had bought the five-star Turnberry Hotel and golf courses for around \$51.5 million.

Christmas was also an unseasonably busy time for Patriot American Hospitality, based in Dallas, as it stepped up its efforts to finalise the acquisition of Arcadian International, the Surrey hotel operator and developer capitalised at less than £90 million. An announcement is expected in the next couple of weeks.

Although neither deal is massive, the significance lies in the huge amounts of cash both Starwood and Patriot have been throwing at the US hotel industry. Starwood's acquisition of TTT, owner of the Sheraton chain, is expected to be completed next month and follows its takeover of Westin Hotels & Resorts for \$1.8 billion. Virtually overnight, Starwood has become one of the world's biggest hotel proprietors.

Patriot, meanwhile, has forked out \$2.1 billion for Interstate Hotels and a further \$1.1 billion for Wyndham Hotel Corporation, taking its total spending on recent deals to almost \$5 billion. And in the last few days, Meditrust, a REIT that has become the largest operator of healthcare properties in the US, unveiled a \$3 billion move into hotels with the acquisition of La Quinta Inns, based in Texas.

The impetus for these deals has been driven not just by the strong rebound in the US lodging industry but by a renewed surge of interest in REITs, whose trust status was brought in to revive the moribund property sector in the early 1980s. This allows them to avoid paying any corporate tax provided they return at least 95 per cent of their otherwise taxable income to shareholders in the form of dividends. Moreover, a handful of the trusts, including Starwood, Patriot and Meditrust, have been able to benefit from a tax

loophole (long-since closed) allowing them to set up two companies — one to own the properties and the other to operate them — with their stock trading in tandem.

Normal REITs are allowed to collect only rents or mortgage payments, whereas these so-called "paired-share" REITs can also pass the profits from their operating companies back to the trust, thereby avoiding a second lot of corporate tax.

Barry Sternlicht, who set up Starwood in 1994, has used this antiquated tax regime to such effect that by last year the group's shares had more than tripled. It was this combination of favourable tax status and booming share price that enabled Mr Sternlicht to outbid the formidable Steve Bollenbach, of Hilton Hotels Corporation, for TTT.

Stephen Potel, an international hotel specialist with Knight Frank, the property agent, said the speed of the deals suggested that the REITs were snapping up as many hotel groups as possible in anticipation of Congress closing the tax loophole. "My understanding of Starwood is that they're opportunistic. They have no specific strategy, but just react to opportunities as they come up."

It is no surprise that Starwood, Patriot and Meditrust have all started looking to Europe, where the consolidation of the hotel industry is in its infancy.

Of the bigger companies, the most obvious takeover candidate is Thistle Hotels, whose chief executive, Robert Peel, was forced out recently by Brierley Investments, its main shareholder. But the REITs are unlikely to have it all their own way. Arne Sorenson, senior vice-president, business development, for Marriott International, said: "There will be continuing consolidation and we will participate in it." And it is unlikely to be long before Mr Bollenbach acquires a stake in Hilton's poor share performance since it lost out on TTT. If he does, a full merger with its UK partner, Ladbrokes, which owns Hilton International, could be back on the agenda.

Turnberry purchase cost \$51.5 million

Numbers up

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT spokesmen are not normally the sort to make Government ministers tremble at the despatch box. But Malcolm Bruce, Treasury spokesman, has been scoring some notable Excise hits on Gordon Brown, most recently on the matter of individual savings accounts, or Issas, claiming to have forced the Treasury to admit that these will increase taxes.

Bruce, if you recall, revealed soon after the Budget a £5 billion "black hole" in the Treasury finances. Gordon Brown has accused him of being "economically illiterate".

Tony Blair says a Teletubby could do his job better — so he must know what he is doing. His secret weapon is David Laws, a 31-year-old economist who made his pile at BZW overseeing interest rate trading. Laws has shown a singular ability to worm numbers out of the available government sources. The trick, he says, is effective use of the House of Commons library. In the case of Issas, the library asked the Treasury if they would mean higher taxes. The Treasury, which would probably have smelled a rat if the request came from an Opposition MP, admitted it to the library. "We were able to demonstrate that the Treasury was saying one thing in one place and another in another."

CONGRATULATIONS to Jeremy Duckworth, at UBS, who is celebrating the arrival of his first-born, a son born just before the new year. Duckworth is a director in corporate finance with a special responsibility for media and entertainment. So it is entirely appropriate that he should have chosen the name Jack. After the usual pleasantries — "Who told you? If it's Anthony Fry I'll kill him" — he admits that, indeed, his offspring is



the namesake of one of the country's more risible soap opera characters. "He's not wearing glasses with Elasto-plast yet," says Duckworth. "I actually rather like the name."

Clean bill

THE Department of Health, as part of a new initiative on prescription charge fraud, is looking for a "fraud supremo" — their wording, and at least they didn't call it a fraud czar. Alas, the sad death last year of Mother Theresa would seem to have robbed them of their only realistic candidate.

The advertisement is full of the usual stuff about experience of "IT" solutions to complex business problems, but

there are some peculiar extra qualifications needed. It must be someone "of substantial personal standing and stature". I can only assume this is some sort of coded reference meaning "someone without too many convictions for fraud", but who knows? The successful paragon of virtue gets a three-year contract and between £47,000 and £77,000. Non-smokers only.

AS BRITAIN takes over the EU presidency, I hear a long-running Anglo-French dispute has again failed to make it on to the agenda. The French are terribly upset because not a sou of the cash bet in Britain on big races in France makes its way to their own racing industry.

They have a draft directive in their favour, but they have yet to enforce it because of British stonewalling. I am glad to say. The sums involved are not small — £130 million bet here on French races last year. The French take over the presidency in the year 2000, when they might be able to do something about it.

Bank error

ARTHUR LEVITT, chairman of the Securities & Exchange Commission, and Alan Greenspan, Federal Reserve Chairman, have run into a little local difficulty. They are sup-

porting Jesse Jackson, the seasoned politician, who is calling for funds from Wall Street to boost the employment of minorities and women there, by agreeing to speak at a conference. This information was included in his fundraising literature.

Alas, all was going well, and \$400,000 had been raised, when it occurred to Greenspan and Levitt that it was perhaps not such a good idea to be seen canvassing funds from companies they are supposed to regulate. Jackson was forced to send out a humiliating letter distancing the two from his fundraising. Somehow I feel it could never happen in London.

MARTIN WALLER



Jesse Jackson, calling on the great and the good

AN EXCLUSIVE OFFER THE TIMES

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SKI FACTS Number of downhill runs: advanced five; intermediate 20; beginners 25.

RESORT ACTIVITIES Ski/snowboard schools, cross country (48kms), winter walking trails (50kms), ice-skating, indoor swimming pool, casino and a wide variety of bars and restaurants.

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CHANGING TIMES

[illegible]

Modest gains at the close

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Carlsberg	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Heineken	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Hoegaarden	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Stout	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Watney	124.50	4.5	11.4

BANKS

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Barclays	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	HSBC	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Midland	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	NatWest	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Paragon	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Prudential	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	TSB	124.50	4.5	11.4

BREWERS & PUBS

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Carlsberg	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Heineken	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Hoegaarden	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Stout	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Watney	124.50	4.5	11.4

BUILDING & CONSTRUCT

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Carlsberg	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Heineken	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Hoegaarden	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Stout	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Watney	124.50	4.5	11.4

BUILDING MATERIALS

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Carlsberg	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Heineken	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Hoegaarden	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Stout	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Watney	124.50	4.5	11.4

CHEMICALS

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Carlsberg	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Heineken	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Hoegaarden	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Stout	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Watney	124.50	4.5	11.4

DISTRIBUTORS

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Carlsberg	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Heineken	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Hoegaarden	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Stout	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Watney	124.50	4.5	11.4

ENGINEERING VEHICLES

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Carlsberg	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Heineken	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Hoegaarden	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Stout	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Watney	124.50	4.5	11.4

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Carlsberg	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Heineken	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Hoegaarden	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Stout	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Watney	124.50	4.5	11.4

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Carlsberg	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Heineken	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Hoegaarden	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Stout	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Watney	124.50	4.5	11.4

INSURANCE

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Carlsberg	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Heineken	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Hoegaarden	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Stout	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Watney	124.50	4.5	11.4

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Carlsberg	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Heineken	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Hoegaarden	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Stout	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Watney	124.50	4.5	11.4

LEISURE & HOTELS

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Carlsberg	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Heineken	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Hoegaarden	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Stout	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Watney	124.50	4.5	11.4

MEDIA

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Carlsberg	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Heineken	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Hoegaarden	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Stout	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Watney	124.50	4.5	11.4

MINING

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Carlsberg	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Heineken	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Hoegaarden	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Stout	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Watney	124.50	4.5	11.4

PROPERTY

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Carlsberg	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Heineken	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Hoegaarden	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Stout	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Watney	124.50	4.5	11.4

RETAILERS, FOOD

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Carlsberg	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Heineken	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Hoegaarden	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Stout	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Watney	124.50	4.5	11.4

RETAILERS, GENERAL

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Carlsberg	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Heineken	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Hoegaarden	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Stout	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Watney	124.50	4.5	11.4

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98	1997/98
High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
125.00	124.00	Adnams	124.50	4.5	11.4
125.00	124.00	Beck's	124.50	4.5	11.4
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SATURDAY

20P

This Saturday, make a date with the Saturday Times,
including the new 100-page glossy magazine.

Spinnin
out of th
big top

CONCERTS:

Talent shows
its future colour

PLATE

Arts

So where did we leave the plot, before we broke for mince pies and turkey? As I recall, the arts were up Nightmare Alley without a wake-up call. The Arts Council had no chairman or secretary-general, Covent Garden had no board, MPs screamed of incompetence. Nearly everybody was broke.

Chris Smith, Culture Secretary, was proving to be as dynamic as a cream bun in a puddle. And the luvvies who venerated Labour so noisily last May were starting to curse the very water on which Tony Blair walked. "All that windy rhetoric!" they exclaimed. "Where's the action?"

Well, it seems that we are finally about to get some. But whether the luvvies will approve must be in doubt. An announcement about the new Arts Council chairman is imminent. And if what 97 people have told me in the past week is true, the big cheese being wooed is Gerry Robinson, the multimillionaire boss of the £8 billion Granada Group—and the star turn in some of the most vicious takeover battles of the past decade.

Of course the appointment is not certain yet. But the very fact that he is top of Smith's wish-list says rather ominous things about Smith's view of the Arts Council. Indeed, the present delay appears to be merely a matter of finding a regular slot for arts work in Robinson's complicated life. He spends three days each week in his native Donegal. He chairs Granada and BSkyB. And he has ambitions to merge the entire ITV network, preferably under his own iron leadership. They do say that if you want something done you should ask a busy person, but there must be limits.

There must also be doubt about whether arts people—nearly all of them struggling to run their lives or companies on a shoestring and a prayer—can identify with an Arts Council chairman whose present salary is £857,000. By any definition Robinson is a fat cat, even if he did make a famous

conversion (and donation) to Labour before the election.

Why would Smith want to put a boardroom bruiser in charge of the Arts Council? I don't think Robinson is being recruited for his knowledge of the Renaissance madrigal. So let's look at his colourful career and make our own wild surmise.

One of his first acts at Granada was to remove David Plowright, the respected head of Granada TV, as part of a purge that saw creative types generally brought under the tight fist of accountants. Producers and celebrities were livid; indeed, John Cleese sent Robinson what is surely the most famous fax in broadcasting history: "F--- off out of it, you ignorant upstart caterer."

It read, with Chaucerian elegance. But Robinson didn't. Indeed he weathered the storm, just as he did the Labour campaign four years ago to strip Granada of its TV franchise because of job losses and



RICHARD MORRISON

alleged diminishing programme quality under Robinson's leadership. "This is a story of boardroom savagery, the like of which British TV has never seen," fumed Ann Clwyd, then Labour's heritage spokeswoman, to the Independent Television Commission.

Gosh, how times change! The "boardroom savage" is now courted by the very same Labour Party to run the Arts Council. The ninth son of an Irish carpenter, Robinson is said to be utterly charming when not concocting his dawn raids and hostile bids. But his arrival inside any organisation does tend to be rather like the entry of Arnold Schwarzenegger into a Hollywood plot: a signal for carnage to commence. True, many people feel that the Arts Council needs a good shake-up. Whether it needs to be purged, downsized, gutted, rationalised and hung out to dry is another matter.

Meanwhile, in another part of the madhouse, Peter Mandelson perfects his plans for the £750 million Dome of Doom. This week he flew to Disney World and professed himself newly inspired after studying the ways of the Mighty Mouse.

He then hastened to reassure church leaders that the Millennium Experience would also be rich in spiritual nourishment.

You don't need to be Ludwig Wittgenstein to sense a certain logical incompatibility here. Mandelson is displaying the fatal "all things to all people" thinking that has dogged the dome from the start. The fact is that, with less than two years to go, the Greenwich team appears to have no fixed ideas about content, no chance of putting an effective transport infrastructure in place, and no one on board with experience of staging live entertainment on a mass scale. Even by the standards of British politics, this blind leap into the notoriously treacherous waters of showbiz must be judged an act of mind-blowing arrogance. And the one possible rescuer, Sir Cameron Mackintosh, severed his links with the dome last month. Yet this week our newspapers

were full of normally sane chaps arguing that, since Mandelson is such a canny and confident political operator, he "won't allow the dome to fail". On Wednesday the Editor of *The Independent*, no less, declared that the dome "in the end will stand as an example of old-fashioned leadership, taking us into the 2000s in a thoughtful, well-intentioned and alert way".

Well, it's a fascinating point of view. The trouble is, assessing a project's chance of success solely by measuring the aura of bravado surrounding its launch is a notoriously inexact, not to say stupid, science. On that basis, the Scottish football team would reach every World Cup final, Neil Kinnock would have reached 10 Downing Street, and Richard Branson would have reached his balloon before it took off. There is a jolly subject coming out this month. It's called *Titanic*. It reminds us that events have a way of conspiring to thwart grandiose projects that "won't be allowed to fail". And the Greenwich Dome, I fear, has nemesis written all over it.

Spinning out of the big top

If you still think of the big top in terms of elephants dolefully clutching each other's tails, or hyperactive midgets pouring water on one another's heads, you should promptly buy, read or postmark your way to the Albert Hall and allow Cirque du Soleil to disabuse you.

This Canadian outfit offers not just a fresh style of circus, but an entire new-look world. The company trips, prances or rolls onstage in garb that variously makes its members look like silvery centaurs, tiny toy ballerinas, and crosses between purple cockerels and 18th-century beaux. You would not be the least surprised to learn that they had come by flying saucer to prove to us earthlings that, as far as imaginative dexterity and physical prowess go, their civilisation is far superior.

Maybe *Alegria* has not quite the lavish variety and visual strangeness of *Saltimbanco*, the show the Soleil folk first brought to London in 1996; but they still leave you feeling they were created by an alien process. You don't have to be a Friar to spin through the air, or a pebble to turn a dozen times before landing, or a ghost to wear your head in your armpit. These creatures can do all that, thanks to joints that have presumably been put on the wrong way round and wings invisibly sprouting from their shoulderblades.

Anyway, contortionists give their imitations of spiders, crabs, chewing gum and mercury, and, in one case, do impossible things with hula hoops while upside-down and inside-out. Chunky figures bring mattresses onto the stage or clamber onto swings and proceed to flout the laws of gravity. One of the few Britons in the company, Paul Bowler, dives in and out of a spiralling steel-and-air cube, giving the impression of Leonardo's exemplary human caught in a geometric swirl of rainbow hues. A Hawaiian called Lisiate Tuione Tovo disdains merely to swallow flames, preferring to pick them up, shift them, and half-dance, half-bathe inside them.

Not everything astounds. The clowns could be funnier and less whimsical. Jokey items in which gormless men

Alegria
Albert Hall

pretend to be flies stuck in a web, or bid farewells to empty overcoats at railway stations, are unlikely to entrance veterans of the London Mime Festival.

Yet even relatively ordinary items take on a marvellous quality in Andrew Watson's production, subsumed as they are into a seamlessly exotic universe. These athletes and acrobats cannot even take a bow without suggesting they have ventured in from 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, or out of one of the more arcane Greek myths, or both.

Add strange chants and weird tootles, a hovering pterodactyl, a dwarfish ringmaster with a hunch, a paunch and bright red tails, and spectral figures watching from above, and you have an evening that can be recommended almost as unreservedly as *Saltimbanco*. Once again Soleil has created an imaginative world that acknowledges tradition, reaches into the future, and is ceaselessly busy in the present. Once again it will keep your organs of wonder exercised: eyes, ears and, yes, the dreamy bits in between.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE
This review appeared in late editions of *The Times* yesterday



Cirque du Soleil's Hawaiian fire dancer, Lisiate Tuione Tovo, doesn't merely swallow flames, but half-bathes in them

Two's company, three's a mess

DOING things behind closed doors is an altogether English obsession, and one knows one should really get out more when domestic bliss turns into mutual abuse and you are one Martin short of ripping each other's hearts out. It's the thrill of the abuse that relieves the boredom, though, with the pleasure principle cancelling the moral standards of a wider world.

Robert David MacDonald invites us to join in such deliciously decadent pursuits in his new play for the Citizens' tiny and at times hot and bothersome Stalls Studio. Here all passion between

The Ice House
Glasgow

bumbling Bryan and cool-as-a-cucumber Heller has long since been spent, drowned in a sexless, bourgeois hell of things left unsaid and, more importantly, fantasies unspoken. But when Bryan introduces the metaphorical young man called Rod—a louchy young magpie with his eye on the main chance—into the household as his secretary, the ice melts, spilling over into dangerous waters indeed.

From the off, MacDonald's world view comes on strong with the point of view of a good old-fashioned sensualist. The clipped cut and thrust of Bryan and Heller's sparring cases into full-blown bisexual stalking, as if *Enter-taining Mr Sloane* had moved across town to hang out with the seemingly more civilised Hampstead set. There are plenty of other echoes: an unborn child called from *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, a master/servant mistress power struggle from *Pinter's The Servant*. But who ends up on top here is an altogether messier affair, as all the

libertine ideals go belly-up into the realm of melodrama. It is all handsomely delivered on Kenay Miller's stark, virgin white set. Henry Ian Cusick's Rod is a dark and dangerous foil to Derwent Watson's Bryan and Andrea Hart's Heller. But in the end the play ends up a victim of its own cool restraint, its symbolism too deep, its philosophy too textbook. If *The Ice House* drew more of the blood it alluded to, it might have more of a grip on the heart and soul of matters. But that's not how we do things here, is it?

NEIL COOPER

CONCERTS: Guitars and flute lead the youth revolution; and an almost too-perfect baritone

Talent shows off its future colours

IT IS encouraging to observe that the talented young performers taking part in the PLG concerts on Wednesday night have already learnt the importance of making an impression on stage.

A male guitar duo (Mark Eden and Christopher Stoll) appeared in smart-but-casual open-necked coloured shirts, while a female Norwegian flautist (Rebecca Larsen) made a striking entrance in diaphanous turquoise, continuing to hold the audience's attention with playing of extraordinary skill and subtlety.

In Simon Holt's *Maiastra* she was called on to bend notes, butter-tongued, even sing while playing. A switch from conventional flute to sensuous alto flute was covered adroitly with a few sung notes and she made a theatrical exit while still playing. Most important of all, she evoked the miracu-

PLG Young Artists
Purcell Room

lous song of the magic golden bird alluded to in the title: the virtuoso technique was never merely an end in itself. David Bedford's *Oh Eva Hear my Lament*, with unhelpfully written, gasp-inducing moto perpetuo and saccharine sub-Poulenc harmonies, was composed specially for Larsen. She deserved better, and got it with Elliott Carter's *Scribo in Vento* and Thea Musgrave's *Piccolo Play*, both brilliantly done, the latter with fine accompaniment from Juliet Edwards.

Eden and Stoll played a taxing programme entirely from memory, impressing further with their meticulously

precise ensemble in Stephen Dodgson's *Pastourelle* and admirable control of shades of pianissimo in Michael Ball's *Music for an Island*, ending with an outlandish repertoire of contemporary techniques in Roland Dyens's engaging *Côté Nord*.

There was delicacy too in the Emiro Ensemble's account of Benjamin Frankel's *Pezzi Pianissimi*, a wider range of colour, skilfully deployed, in three works by Diana Burrell—*Constellations I and II* and *Untitled Composition*—and finely graded playing in Ian Gardiner's resourceful Bass Clarinet Trio. The three players making up this slightly unusual combination demonstrated their exemplary ensemble in Piers Hellawell's *Truth or Consequences*, Sarah Miller's discreet, rippling clarinet arpeggios and Neil Roxburgh's well-integrated piano punctuation providing an ideal backdrop for the eloquently arching melody on Charlotte Eksteen's cello.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Polished to a gloss

Thomas Hampson
Wigmore Hall

IF Thomas Hampson left a trail of disappointment when he cancelled his Wigmore Hall recital at the start of the week, no one could have felt let down by his *Winterreise* there on Wednesday. Not by its searing end, at least, in which one really identifies with the anguish of the lonely winter traveller denied the comfort of death: but at the start of Schubert's cycle the American baritone's singing had been just a little too manicured.

Indeed, what we got was almost two performances, one by Hampson the polished professional, one by the searching leader singer. Churlish though it may be to find his phrasing too perfect or his dark, nutty tone too even,

these wonderful Hampson attributes are not the simple key to a satisfying *Winterreise*, and it was only when he ceased being self-conscious about them that the interpretation took off.

The excellent pianist Wolfram Rieger played with insight and poise throughout. His command of pianistic colour made each song's accompaniment tell its story, from the whispering leaves of *Der Lindenbaum* to the circling bird in *Die Krähe*. Hampson's performances are always big-hearted and sincere, if not psychologically probing. But too much sharp detail in *Winterreise* can leave less space for reflection, and ultimately the baritone achieved a pleasing balance. He caught the pathos of *Einsamkeit*, the illusory quality of *Täuschung* and, most movingly of all, the hopelessness of *Der Wegweiser*. By the end, Hampson got to the heart of what Schubert called his "cycle of shuddering Lieder".

JOHN ALLISON

"★★★★★ BOND IS CATEGORICALLY BACK."
Andrew Collins EMPIRE

"Pierce Brosnan is perfect... cracking sexual energy."
Ruan Elzinga THE INDEPENDENT

"Slicker, faster and funnier than any recent Hollywood product."
Mark Kermode THE TIMES

Tomorrow Never Dies

NOW SHOWING AT CINEMAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

What do you do if papa is a Rolling Stone?

Some join the family business, alongside the offspring of The Who and Bob Dylan. Nigel Williamson reports

The names are familiar, but the faces are not. While Hollywood has long exploited the gene pool of family talent, the second-generation syndrome is far newer in the relatively youthful world of rock'n'roll. But now, as the 30th anniversary of the Woodstock Festival approaches — in August next year — and its survivors settle into middle age and older, the flow of aspiring young stars with pop icon parents is turning into something of a flood.

So far, though, the track record of rock's progeny suggests that pedigree is no guarantee of success. For every Jakob Dylan, whose band, the Wallflowers, is currently selling more records in America than his father Bob, there is a Julian Lennon, who has never quite succeeded in emerging from John's mighty shadow.

Unhappiest of all is the example of Jeff Buckley, son of the 1960s hippy troubadour Tim. Jeff's untimely death last year was a tragic repetition of history which saw the enormous talents of both father and son lost while both were still young men. Then there are the strangest and most unlikely lineages. Adam F, whose adventurous drum and bass album *Colours* was voted one of the best of 1997, by David Sinclair in these pages, just happens to be the son of the leather-clad 1970s popster, Alvin Stardust.

To these well-bred ranks we can shortly add Adam Cohen,

23, whose album could well be racked alongside his father's 1967 debut classic, *Songs of Leonard Cohen*, and Rufus Wainwright, signed to Steven Spielberg's DreamWorks label, who must live down having his babyhood musically celebrated in his father Loudon's infamous *Rufus* is a *Tit Man*. Others hoping that 1998 will see their offspring follow in their own illustrious musical footsteps include Ronnie Wood of the Rolling Stones, Richard Thompson

'I feel sorry for my Dad because he's never not been famous'

and Steven Stills, once of Buffalo Springfield and Crosby, Stills and Nash.

Ahead of them all in the fame queue, though, is Emma Townshend, the daughter of The Who's Pete, who this month releases the first single from her strikingly mature forthcoming debut album, *Winterland*. At 28 she has already made her own way in the world, turning down a record deal ten years ago to pursue an academic career.

'I feel sorry for my Dad in a way because he's never not been famous,' Townshend says. 'He's never done an ordinary job in an ordinary office and been treated as an ordinary person. That's quite a loss. He can't just go into a shop and listen to other people's conversations, he's never had a private glimpse into other people's worlds because he's been a rock star since he was 18.'

She denies that there is any burden in having a famous father, although she admits that some will attribute her recording deal with East West Records to nepotism. 'There haven't been many people who have had to cope with it in rock yet. But people can appreciate Jamie Lee Curtis and Tony Curtis as completely different individuals in the movies. I'm happy to trade on the family name — I'm proud of it — and I know once people listen to my record they will forget about my Dad.'

Townshend's piano-led songs recall the work of Tori Amos and Kate Bush rather than the rock that made her father famous, but inevitably her upbringing has exerted a strong influence. 'Although my Dad never had copies of his records around the house and I am unfamiliar with a lot of his work, he would always come home and talk about the music business.'

She is a fully paid-up member of the 1960s generation, a graduate of the progressive school in West London to which many of the Woodstock



Yesterday, today and tomorrow? (Clockwise from bottom left) Julian Lennon's star waned, but Jakob Dylan's success can only inspire Emma Townshend



Sheepish in wolverine's clothing

Some days, you just get the feeling that all of rock history's loudest stories could be found in a bumper book of fairytales. *Sleeping Beauty* — teenage girl stays in bedroom until woken by kiss — echoes the life of many heavy metal fans in the Midlands. *Babe in the Wood* — kids suffer from hypothermia and exposure in Great Outdoors — sounds mightily like Woodstocks I and II.

And then there's *The Emperor's New Clothes*, wherein a regal personage has such a mighty PR team that no one realises that he is parading naked in the streets. Save a small child who, presumably, doesn't read the tabloids. While there are embittered hordes who would claim that both the Spice Girls and Oasis are, metaphorically, walking around with their inadequate parts covered only by a hyperbolic press release, there is another for whom *The Emperor's New Clothes* is a factual, blow-by-blow account of her career, but with one small twist.

That person is Louise, the

Caitlin Moran wonders why people fell for the notion of pop poppet Louise as the queen of raunch'n'roll



Louise, cute as a bug's ear, and about as sexy

googly-eyed blonde faun who left EMI to pursue a solo career, and the twist is that while every magazine and newspaper titillatingly declares her to be 'Hot' and 'Naked' on the cover, inside we find her admittedly stripped down to some 'saucy'

pants and a well-placed arm draped over a less than cavernous cleavage, but looking so miserable, tepid, unwilling and un-Hot that one feels like an intruder in the changing rooms at Tammy Girl.

Surely there has never been anyone in the history of pop who has exuded such an aura of wanting to wear a pinafore and a nice snugly pair of woolly tights.

Naked is a state of mind. There are men and women who embody, as Ricki Lake puts it, being 'all that and a bag of chips' so greedily that they look naked dressed in a floor-length coat and a crash helmet. Mae West, Ewan McGregor, Tallulah Bankhead, and Jamie Theakston from *Live and Kicking* all exude essence of filth-weasel. It's all in the snake-like glimmer of the eye, the splay of the hands, and a way of walking that suggests they have one of

those vibrating Ernie from *Sesame Street* dolls tucked into their pants.

The only glitter in Louise's eyes is from nerves, her hands are clenched and she walks like a 12-year-old in a school crocodile going to a swimming lesson. Her *Top of the Pops* performances are always a mortifying experience. Styled with all the delicacy of an Ann Summers mannequin, this polite-looking, unassuming girl tentatively runs through her dance routines. She touches her body with all the lasciviousness of someone pulling the bobby bits off a jumper, and grinds her hips like one of the Mint-Pops.

One horrible *Chart Show* experience had her in chains, with a studded collar around her neck. She looked like an adorable but bewildered collie puppy being sold into slavery. This isn't a diatribe against Louise herself — that would be like stamping on tiny baby pigeons — but against her stylists, management and 'advisers', who have tried to emulate Kylie. Minogue's career down to the last strappy sandal. Kylie started off as a squeaky clean pop child, then had a fling with Michael Hutchence and became Sex-Kylie, with lucrative results. But Jamie Redknapp, Louise's beau, is no Hutchence, and Louise is still, Sandy from *Grease* before the *You're the One that I Want* scene.

The squealing horror of this, however, is that everyone seems to believe that this Julie Andrews of the Nineties is actually a totem of burning, keening sexual abandon. The readers of *FHM* and *Melody Maker* declared her to be one of the Sexiest Women of 1997, after Gillian Anderson, who plays Agent Scully in *The X-Files*. Anderson's nomination makes sense. She has that greased glitter in her eye, and comes out with quotes such as: 'There's something provocative about the concept of having intimate relations with something that isn't human.'

Louise's Big Sex Quote, on the other hand, came when, questioned why she didn't lose her virginity until quite late, she said: 'I was working so hard with EMI that I didn't really have time to settle down seriously with a man.' Well, slow down, tiger!

And yet, bizarrely, a gullible section of the public believes that the little empress, walks the streets naked, for a bare-fleshed, Godiva-ish frisson, rather than as an embarrassed, easily manipulated girl being marketed as Madonna Ciccone, when she more closely resembles Madonna, mother of baby Jesus.

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'Television does make a difference'

It is impossible to watch Kate Blewett playing with her son and daughter without dwelling on the terrible contrast between their happiness and the wretched suffering of children that she has exposed during her career as a documentary-maker.

For Blewett, the extremes are even more painfully defined. Seldom, she says, can she bathe Frederica, four, and Monty, 20 months, read them a story or see them laughing without recalling horrific images she has seen first-hand of infants dying from starvation and neglect, shackled by their hands and feet or forced into miserable servitude.

It is two years since she and co-producer Brian Woods exposed the "dying rooms" of Chinese orphanages, where babies were filmed in conditions of appalling neglect, creating a worldwide wave of revulsion.

Few who saw the pitiful image of Mei Ming, a two-year-old girl apparently in the advanced stages of malnutrition with rheum-filled eyes and a scabrous mouth, dying alone and ignored under a pile of blankets, will ever forget it. The child, dumped because of her sex and China's one-child only policy, had been deprived of food or water for 14 days.

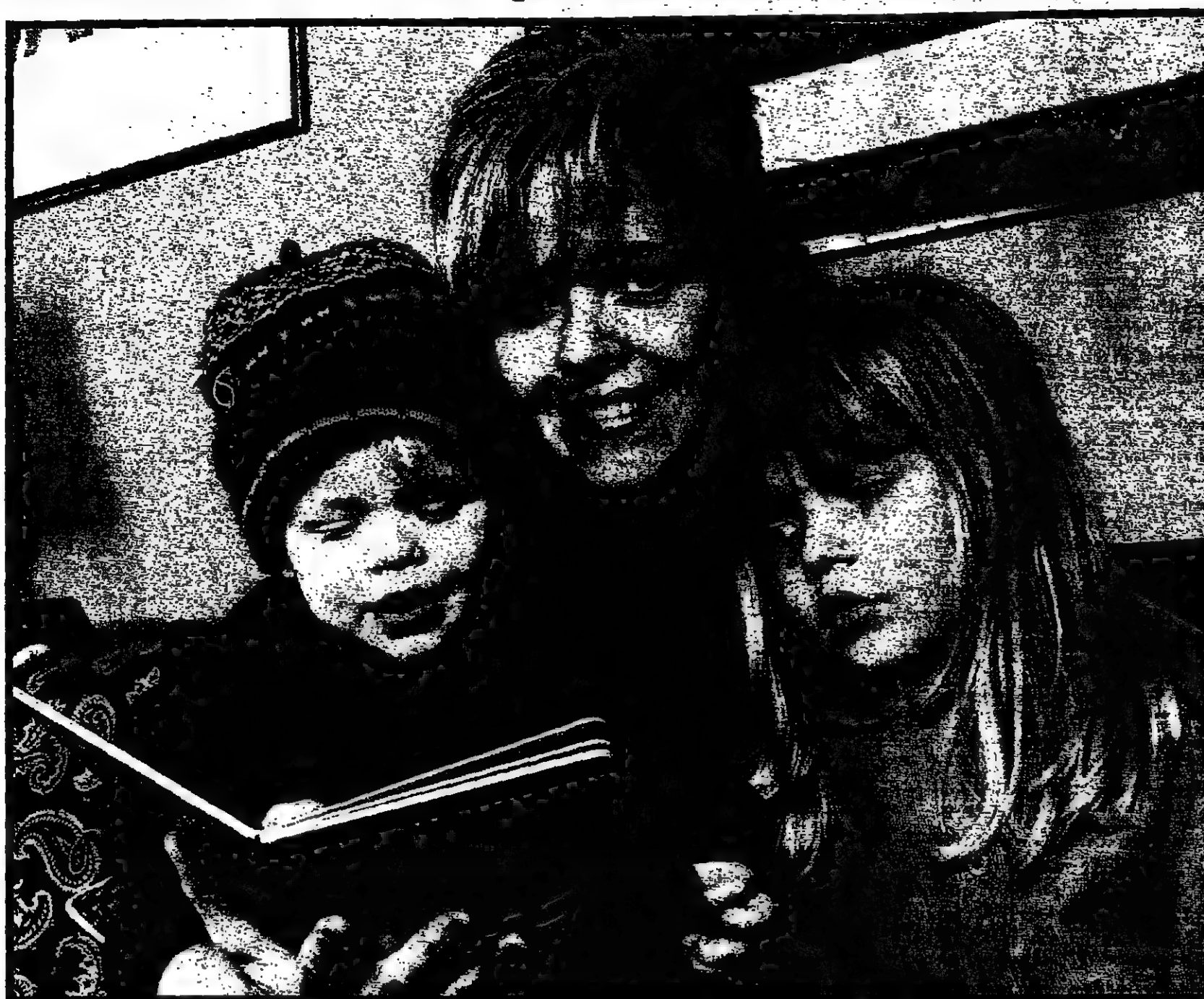
Last month Channel 4 screened the latest missile from Woods and Blewett — a harrowing series of films charting various child abuses throughout the world, from street urchins in Guatemala turning to glue to deaden the pain of hunger and beatings by the police to five-year-old girls in Ghana sentenced to a life in temples, where they are regularly raped by the priest to appease the crimes of their families.

The most shocking expose of the *Innocents Lost* series was generally considered to be footage from Greek institutions, Kepeps, where we saw mentally and physically disabled children tied to their cots 24 hours a day. In extreme cases where the patients were considered a danger to others, they were shut away in padlocked cages. The neglect was not born of deliberate cruelty by the carers but more from the fact that the children were deemed as "untreatable" and, therefore, low priority. Disability, the film told us, carries a huge stigma among many Greek families who fear the marriage prospects of healthy siblings may be damaged in case the "bad gene" is passed down. Imperfect children, therefore, are hastily dumped, and often never visited for the rest of their lives.

Woods and Blewett travelled 70,000 miles to 21 countries over a period of 18 months to record such scenes. Like the award-winning *Dying Rooms*, and *Return to the Dying Rooms*, *Innocents Lost* received critical acclaim. But it was not without its detractors. One critic suggested we should not have to watch such atrocities on our television screens. Some viewers called Channel 4 to complain that the team should have concentrated their efforts on exposing abuse in Britain instead, a sentiment which, Blewett says, left them profoundly depressed.

"I get really fed up with those sort of remarks, it makes me so angry. A child suffering is a child suffering. People say we should be focusing on problems in this

Kate Blewett's documentaries of child neglect shocked the world. Interview by Carol Midgley



Kate Blewett with Monty and Frederica. "It was all very well finding out about child neglect but if I had had two miserable children at home it would have been wrong"

country but programmes go out all the time about things happening in Britain. We specifically wanted to look at children who are silenced by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which their governments have ratified. Do these people think we go out there for a laugh?"

Laughs would certainly not appear to have been in abundance for Blewett, 36, as she was forced to juggle the demands of a young family with global travel and the pressure of gaining access to film in the most uncooperative of places. She had an understanding with Woods that she

would not be apart from her children for more than ten days at a time, but would fly back intermittently to the family home, a large Georgian house in a fashionable area of West London.

Her husband, a City financier, was helped to look after the children by two live-in Filipino women whom Blewett has known for years. The daughter of an expatriate doctor of tropical medicine, she grew up in the suburbs of Thailand, Malaysia and Hong Kong where she met the women, a



mother and daughter, and persuaded them to move with her and her husband when they returned to England.

"They really are part of our family and so it made it much easier to go, although I am not saying it was easy. I had to psyche myself up for it and explain the guilt syndrome to Brian. He was very understanding."

"I knew it was all very well finding out about child neglect and exploitation but if I had had two miserable children of my

own at home it would have been wrong. Monty was younger and probably didn't notice too much but if Freddie had said she hated my work or if her character had changed I would have found it very difficult to carry on. My children are my first priority."

It was in 1994 that she noticed an article in the *South China Morning Post* saying children were being abandoned and left to die in Chinese orphanages. Blewett, working as a freelance in Asia mainly for Australian TV, decided to do her own research and travelled to China, armed with a secret pocket camera to collect the evidence.

She later met Woods, who runs an independent production company, True Vision, in London, and they secured development money from Channel 4 before returning to China.

"Anyone could have done it. It was just a case of going over and seeing it. At the time we were totally focused on getting in there and filming it but there were times when you just broke down in the hotel afterwards. We were seeing some terrible things."

"It was the same in the Greek institutions. In some ways I found that almost more painful than the dying rooms. When someone is disabled you feel that life has already been so unfair to them, so when you see them in situations of such deprivation it is heartbreaking."

Blewett says that, far from exaggerating the extent of the abuse as some had suggested, they were forced to tone it down to avoid upsetting viewers.

"There were some scenes we couldn't show on television because they were just too much — children whose limbs were so disfigured they were bent right back and fingernails that had grown into their skin. No one had been making them exercise and they were just wilting. In China the mothers didn't want to give their children away, but in Greece I felt very angry that the parents simply hand over their children then leave them there for life."

She and Woods also decided not to show the children being fed, because it would be too stomach-churning for viewers. The patients are put on their backs and a milk and bread slop is poured down their throats, their faces are wiped and the nurses move on to the next.

"There were adults in there who had been there since childhood, chained to the beds. Some were completely mentally alert. One woman, Anastasia, was 25 and disabled from the waist down but her mind was sharp. She was one of triplets and her parents had dumped them all there. But the thing which has stayed with me about all the things we saw in all the different countries was that each child was as miserable as the next."

Innocents Lost provoked a certain amount of public outrage, albeit on a smaller scale than the *Dying Rooms*. Channel 4 received 11,000 calls from people and letters are being sent to those who expressed an interest in helping.

Blewett says there are petitions being organised about the Greek institutions and wheelchairs are being offered by manufacturers in Britain. Other people have offered to organise help for boys in Siberian penal camps, and Marie & Spencer sent food parcels for the street children in Central America.

She and Woods are now preparing for their next project, which is still not confirmed. "The reaction to the films has shown that television does make a difference. When you get a child, who is not yet ten, saying to you that they want to die, you desperately want to do something. The best thing, the only thing we could do really, was document it and show it to the world and hope that it causes things to change."

KIRSTY YOUNG, the hottest name in television news, is practising for her new *Talk Radio* breakfast show, which starts on Monday. It pitches her against Virgin's Chris Evans, Radio 5 Live and even *Today*, a stressful slot by any standards.

She has to be in the Oxford Street studio by 5.30am, host the three-hour programme, then turn up fresh as a daisy for the much-lauded Channel 5 News, which has just moved forward to 7pm from 8.30pm. A more cloistered existence for the girl about town beckons.

"No boozey dinners on weekdays. I'll have to plan my sleep carefully without

naps in the afternoon," she says. The 28-year-old Scot, who started off as a BBC Radio Scotland presenter, signed up for a year for a sum approaching £500,000, on top of a similar amount from Channel 5.

"To be offered a slice of prime airtime was amazing," she says. "I love what I do, otherwise it would be a recipe for disaster."

The one fly in the ointment is that Channel 5's news audience has plummeted by about a quarter this week because of the earlier start.

The tone of Young's talk show can be deduced from producer and fixer: Chris Cardell, formerly with *Cap-*



tal's axed drive-time news programme *The Way It Is*, and Paul Connery, a former *Sunday Mirror* and *News of the World* executive, the quintessential tabloid man.

"He's sharp and well connected," says Paul Robinson, Talk's general manager. "By April, when Radio 4 is re-launching itself, Kirsty's show will be sizz hot."

DURING the protest against Manchester airport's expansion plans, a Salford media student, Sam Whitaker, now 22, shot film under commission for Channel 5's *What's the Story?* He recorded the final clearance of protesters from 50ft up a tree, as did ITN's Stewart Webb. Today Whitaker, who is now employed on the programme, is due in Crewe Magistrates' Court charged with obstruction, despite pleas from Channel 5's Paul Woolwich, the executive producer, says: "He was not a protester, he was there recording events. They would never treat Kate Adie like that." But then, would Kate Adie park herself up a tree?

BRIAN GLANVILLE, football writer for *The Times*, has emerged furious from an encounter with Radio 4. Plans to revive his hit play *The Comic*, with Roy Hudd as the mentally unstable star, were turned down finally in December to give new writers a chance. "Never again," says Glanville after ten months of being mucked around. Jonathan James Moore, the head of BBC Radio 4's light entertainment, says regretfully that the new commissioning system has created "a bit of anguish". This is the same system that kept Frank Muir's autobiography *A Kentish Lad* off the network, although Moore assures me that a proper tribute on Radio 4 is being plotted.

LAST WORD on the Jack Straw affair. Away from the media some over new year, I found that people had no idea it was Straw's son who was at the centre of the fuss. Here is my advice: the next time anyone tries to conceal something, turn detective. Whose picture is being run next to the story? Which name is recurring without a compelling reason? Wise up.

THE glossy magazine *Company* focuses its February issue's health page on a letter from a reader suffering from the trauma of a drooping bosom. "I am 19 and my breasts sag really badly. When I take off my bra (I am a 24B) they just hang there and when I lie down they flop to the side and look awful."

Dr Helen Peters replies soothingly that the girl is doing everything she can through exercise etc (and advises her to concentrate "on your good points instead"). But Dr Peters then adds this sign-off line: "It may help to know that men worry just as much about having saggy testicles."

"Never heard of it," said my husband in amazement. "Doesn't she mean brewer's droop?" asked a male friend. A tangle of male journalists on



THE *Times* produced similar befuddlement. Perhaps Dr Peters might ring the diary and explain where she gained this insight.

Gone fishing for a filler **LAST WEEK** the *Daily Mail* started a hunt for Britain's longest-surviving goldfish (well, it was a slow New Year's Day). "Is this the nation's oldest goldfish?" it asked of Bel Jet Ranger, Janey Walcott's 15-year-old fish, purchased at a Badminton air show.

The *Daily Telegraph* followed the story up the next day, producing Clavers, "the goldfish that came in a Jiffy bag lives for 25 years". I waited to see what other monsters lurked in domestic

aquariums. But a long silence ensued once newswires had sobered up and (presumably) realised that fish are not issued with birth certificates.

Then, on Wednesday, the *Daily Mail* returned with a letter from another owner of a 25-year-old goldfish, Toshi. I rang *The Daily Telegraph's* newswires to see whether they would better it.

"No more stories are planned: it is a matter for the letters page," one of its news editors said, diplomatically.



Was I in the news just recently? No, I've forgotten

Changes in the night

Radio 3's small-hours schedule has been revamped for Europe

RADIO 3 has changed its night-time schedules. *Through the Night*, running from 1am to 6am, is going European with a music programme simultaneously broadcast across much of the Continent.

Although Radio 3's plans to shake up its mornings have hogged the limelight, in the early hours of Tuesday its programme for night-owls was altered — although little was said to listeners.

The presenter, Donald Macleod, will stay on, but the music selections devised for British listeners are being replaced by a more eclectic mix of classics to appeal to a Europe-wide audience. They will know it as "Euroclassical Nocturno".

The programme is created in London under the direction of Peter Thresh, a respected Radio 3 (Mining the Archives) producer who oozes enthusiasm. It is then distributed around Europe by satellite for simultaneous broadcast on subscribing local stations. The trick is that the costs of serving this tiny but cultured audience are initially being shared around six publicly funded radio stations in Denmark, Norway, The Netherlands, Ireland and Slovenia.

Thanks to the production/broadcasting split of last year, the BBC's Radio Classical Music Department is no longer an integral part of Radio 3, but it is still housed in Broadcasting House and is anxious to expand its empire. The departmental head, other European stations for the two-year contract to supply the overnight service for public radio stations.

The initiative is driven by the Geneva-based European Broadcasting Union, which was impressed with Radio 3's original *Through the Night*.

It is guaranteeing the two-year contract.

Stations across Europe have agreed to subscribe, share a common editorial policy and trust the BBC to make the right selection of music. The programme, in an instantly usable digital format and with breaks for locally injected news, builds to a nightly concert. BBC producers also add detailed notes for translation into the appropriate languages. As Dr Graham Dixon, the editor responsible for international classical music programmes, says: "The BBC is not alone in having its in-house orchestras; others have even stronger choral traditions and youth choirs. The trick is to use the flood of recorded events to create an interesting service."

THE new service also includes genres available from the newly accessible archives in Eastern Europe: Bartók playing Bartók, Kodály conducting Kodály. But the long-term question is where this leaves Radio 3, a network under pressure to expand its appeal and cut its costs. Radio 3 has handed over a large chunk of its airtime to BBC production, but as a quid pro quo will reduce its programme costs. Nicholas Kenyon, Controller of radio 3, is delighted. "I hope British listeners won't notice the difference," he says.

One unresolved problem is that the night music is interrupted for part of the year by schools programming. However, with digital expansion allied to satellite distribution, it is possible for BBC experts to schedule a 24-hour Europe-wide classical music channel — provided someone will pay.

MAGGIE BROWN



Kirsty Young's breakfast show for Talk Radio means a more cloistered existence beckons

JUST before Christmas, Radio 4's *Today* programme had yet another spat with the Government. This time Labour spin-doctors said John Humphrys had been too rough with poor Harriet Harman as she batted to explain why cutting lone parent benefits was a good thing, and threatened non-cooperation in future. It then emerged that Labour was fearful about Kevin Marsh, the respected editor of *The World at One* and *PM*, landing the vacant post of *Today* editor. In the event, the BBC aligned on the in-house favourite, Rod Liddle, 37, the deputy editor, despite his image problem: a ring in his ear and a penchant for sitting on floors in the middle of editorial meetings. Liddle, a former pupil of Abbey Wood Comprehensive in southeast

London, trained as a newspaper journalist on Cardiff's *Western Mail* and actually worked for the Labour Party front bench, writing speeches and researching. He later studied for a degree (social psychology) at the London School of Economics.

Liddle scorns the notion that Cabinet ministers are blackballing the programme (although William Hague chose to pop up on Nicky Campbell's Radio 5 slot this week) and is determined to reclaim *Today's* reputation for landing the day's major political interview, while also expanding arts and science coverage. "We have to be sharper, first, and to give reporters more scope to be brave." As for Humphrys? "I think he is unreservedly brilliant."

Mystery missin

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Mystery of Auntie's missing millions

CHRISTMAS produced a television mystery worthy of the skills of both Miss Marple and Hetty Wainthropp. Millions of people went missing without any warning or obvious explanation. When the ratings people checked, they were simply not there. Naturally, the BBC issued its usual press release — It Was A BBC Christmas Official, claiming its Christmas trouncing of ITV. This is a bit like saying that Santa Claus appeared on Christmas Eve this year as usual. The BBC always wins the Christmas ratings battle with ITV and always has, although there have been some close squeals over the years. It is a curious fact of life in British television that on high days and holidays and even when the BBC and ITV are covering the same England football match simultaneously, the corporation scores an effortless victory.

Yet you could study the Christmas press releases for a very long time without finding any reference to the missing millions. When you lose viewers, the smart thing for broad-

casters is to say that the share won by the new channels was 34.6 per cent, nowhere near the peak of more than 40 per cent.

During last year's Christmas period, Sky's top four programmes were football matches. This year the top four programmes were football matches. The truth is that the satellite broadcasters make very little fuss about Christmas and seem to make few seasonal concessions in the schedules. Special Christmas Eve fare from Sky movies to take viewers into the early hours of Christmas Day was the exception but extremely violent film *Hunt*. VH-1, the satellite pop music channel for 30-year-olds, did at least manage something special for Christmas — its own Queen's Speech. It was delivered by Brian May, the Queen guitarist.

But if the missing millions did not move to satellite, the overwhelming numbers, where did they go? Will Wynter, chief executive of BBC Broadcasting, is worried enough to call for an internal study. He wants a seven-year comparison to find out whether there really is a noticeable downward trend or whether this was a rogue year and the Christmas ratings simply do go up and down over the years in unpredictable ways.

One thing that will have changed is the relative pulling power of films in the schedules of the national broadcasters. By the time that most films reach the conventional TV screens, a high proportion of viewers will already have seen them in cinemas, on cable and satellite or on video. The top ITV film over Christmas was *Pretty Woman*, which is known by heart by most of the audience. It still managed to draw 8.8 million, but it's not hard to see why it did not get 15 million.

ANOTHER factor was almost certainly other screen-based diversions. Children and adults who were given computer games were less likely to have been on the sofa for Harry Enfield. Perhaps more people simply fled the country this year.

In any case, the UK's traditional broadcasters undoubtedly face years of intensifying competition. Planning for next year's Christmas viewing should start now, and if the BBC has any sense, it will concentrate on turing *Del Boy* and *Rodney* out of retirement so that *Only Fools and Horses* can top the Christmas ratings again and win back some of the missing millions.



Raymond Snoddy

The week's top show, excluding soaps, was *Men Behaving Badly*, total audience 16.34 million, including those who later watched it on their videos. This compared badly with the 22 million peak hit by what was billed as the last ever *Only Fools and Horses*. There were other similarly worrying disappearing audiences.

It was perhaps inevitable that columnists, particularly those who have only recently discovered satellite TV and all those endless films, should rush to pronounce the death of terrestrial, or network, TV, as it is increasingly called these days. In a transactional world where the viewer will be able to choose what to watch and when to watch it, all for a relatively modest fee, who needs conventional television, goes the argument. Up to a point. It may happen some day but not just yet and there is very little in the official Barb ratings to suggest a stampede to satellite. Cable and satellite's share of total viewing, at 11.7 per cent, was marginally up, probably reflecting the number of

Richard Evans on an odds-on favourite that was overtaken by events

For followers of the Turf, it had become virtually a one-horse race. The tabloid *Racing Post*, funded by the wealth of the Maktoum family of Dubai, was galloping clear of the broadsheet *Sporting Life* after a head-to-head circulation war going back more than ten years.

The *Post*, with sales bolstered by a special edition that replaced the *Life* in many of Britain's 8500 betting shops, could apparently do no wrong. A young, enthusiastic staff, led by a talented editor and including a champion tipster, produced a vibrant newspaper packed with news, features and accurate statistics — the lifeblood of punters.

The *Life*, by contrast, haunted by a suspect production system, a dodgy database and questionable management decisions, was too often riddled with mistakes or omissions and appeared, like some of its staff, one-paced and destined for the knacker's yard. To most outsiders it was a question of when, not if, the *Post* would be declared the winner.

Imagine the surprise and shock, therefore, when Mirror Group Newspapers, owners of the *Life*, announced a month ago that it had, in effect, acquired the *Post* from the Maktoums for £1. No one at the *Post's* Raynes Park offices, including a board of directors that was kept in the dark about the deal, could believe it. Nor could Dick Francis and Devon Loch, inexplicably sprawled to the ground within sight of the winning post in the 1956 Grand National had defied the odds to win so spectacularly. And still they ask the same questions: why?

There has been no satisfactory answer; perhaps there

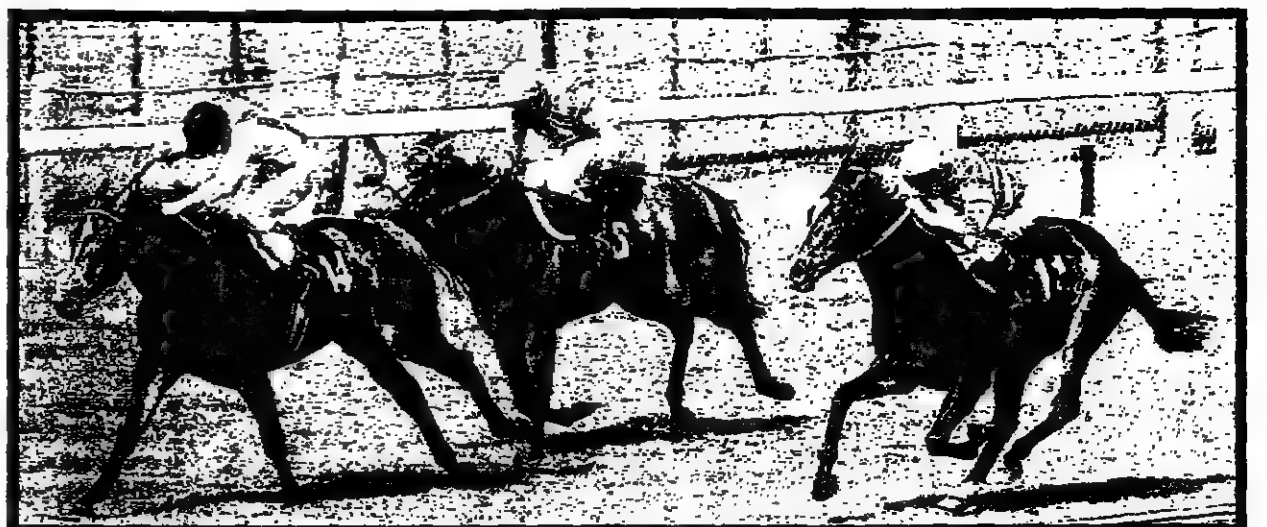


Photo finish: after a 12-year battle over control of the Turf, The Sporting Life has acquired its rival for £1



never will be. Senior insiders at Mirror Group say the straw that broke the camel's back was the special betting shop edition of the *Post*, which, while giving the tabloid a circulation lead, postponed still further the day when the paper would break even. "The *Post* thought it was cutting the *Life's* throat with that edition; in fact, it was cutting its own," a Mirror insider said.

Not so, say *Post* executives, who insist the edition was "one of the best things we ever did to inflict damage on our competitor". Still, nobody disputes that the Maktoums have lost probably upwards of £50 million since the paper's launch, and, while the scale of the losses had declined, profit still seemed a mirage to Sheikh Mohammed and his brothers.

"It had been clear to both sides for many years that

eventually the two publications would somehow have to stop competing with each other because the market wasn't big enough for both of them. They were simply cutting each other's throat," a party close to the talks says. "The racing industry could never economically support two papers. In the end the Maktoums got fed up with people at the *Racing Post* spending their money willy-nilly."

Sheikh Mohammed basically wanted out, but wanted to protect the title, of which he was very proud, and to let down as gently as possible the people who had been there from the beginning," says the source. And so a deal was done — "very quickly in the end" — that saw Mirror Group guarantee publication of the *Post* for ten years, with the *Life* becoming a general sports paper. Days later Sheikh Mohammed also announced that he would reduce his string of horses in training in Britain unless there was a dramatic increase in prize-money — lending more weight to the financial argument for offloading the *Post*.

But what of the future? Subject to approval by the Department of Trade and Industry, the changeover is likely to take place some time after the Grand National in April. Two racing staffs will be reduced to one under the editorship of Alan Byrne, who has been at the helm of the *Post* since 1993. He will decide which journalists — about 80 from both papers — will join the new *Post*. Large-scale redundancies appear inevitable. But his toughest task may be to ensure that the undisputed

quality of the *Post* is maintained after the move to Canary Wharf. After all, the paper is likely to be produced with the very production system and database that lost the *Life* so many readers to the *Post* in recent months.

Senior Mirror management insist that the "bugs" that afflicted the technology have been sorted out and that it now works "very efficiently". However, Mr Byrne and his *Post* colleagues still have to be convinced.

And will Mirror Group, not renowned for investing in journalism, be prepared to put in the necessary resources to maintain a trade paper that will have no direct competition? What is to stop them, sceptics ask, from constantly trimming the budget — and journalistic coverage — so the *Post* becomes nothing more than a "glorified tipping sheet" similar to the *Life* in the days before the *Post*.

The answer may lie in the hands of Mr Byrne — a determined and widely respected Editor — who will need to be assured that he will have the wherewithal to do the job properly. If the *Racing Post* continues to be edited by the 35-year-old Dubliner in Canary Wharf, then the punters can breathe a sigh of relief. If not, then the future is worrying.

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Editor accuses Chirac of interference

The influential Editor of *Le Monde* says politicking stopped his vital purchase of a news magazine. Report by Alan Tillier

French media politics are far more than anything that appears in the newspapers. Soft-spoken but tough-minded Jean-Marie Colombani, the 50-year-old Editor and saviour of France's leading daily, *Le Monde*, talks of threats from on high and shifting alliances within France's largely intertwined political and media fronts.

M. Colombani, who rose through the newspaper's editorial ranks to head the evening bible of the intelligentsia — and the only paper in France controlled by its journalists — points his finger at President Chirac. He believes that his recent failure to acquire *L'Express*, one of a trio of weekly news magazines — owned by the water and services giant Compagnie Générale des Eaux (CGE) — was caused by behind-the-scenes political manoeuvring.

Having pulled *Le Monde* back from the brink, M. Colombani needed *L'Express* to strengthen what is virtually a one-paper group, which has prestigious but small offshoots such as the monthly *Le Monde Diplomatique*, circulation 160,000.

M. Colombani had restored *Le Monde*'s circulation to 380,000, equal to its 1981 peak, and achieved the first profit of Fr4 million (£400,000) for seven years. The previous year, 1996, losses rose to Fr60 million. He argued that he needed *L'Express* (600,000 weekly sales, profits in 1996 of Fr50 million) to buttress Europe's most highbrow newspaper, one where the editorial department once had as many philosophers as newsmen.

"I don't want to go through that again," M. Colombani says after his three-year battle to save the paper, which involved the biggest design changes in its 53-year history and a new editorial structure more in touch with contemporary France. News was separated more clearly from opinion. Business coverage was increased. A new section,

Communication, was created to deal with the media. Cultural coverage, already strong, was improved. More foreign correspondents were added, articles became more focused. The style became more readable, less literary.

Above all, M. Colombani says he changed the thinking among the staff, "who used to regard anything non-political with contempt. Now we cover many more issues affecting French society".

More photographs were used in a paper once likened by its critics to *Pravda*, and colour was introduced. M. Colombani, previously an "insider's insider" after 20 years as political correspondent, blossomed as a more Anglo-American, news-orientated editor.

One scoop for the new-look paper was the last interview with Diana, Princess of Wales, in which she spoke out against anti-personnel mines, and caused a flap with remarks about the Royal Family. This week *Le Monde* ran two pages on the life and loves of the pop star Johnny Halliday, which would have been unimaginable a short while ago.

L'Express, founded by Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, a famous campaigning journalist in the 1960s, has become more like an American news magazine. It passed to the late Sir James Goldsmith, then to Alcatel, the phone company, and CGE.

Industrialists and financiers own titles to gain influence, not to make serious money. The news magazines make small profits, but only two or three dailies are in the black. They include the popular daily *Le Parisien* (438,000) and its stablemate, the sports daily *L'Equipe* (400,000). Price is one factor for France's weak press — *Le Monde* sells at Fr7.50 a day.

Journalists at *Le Monde* still own 33 per cent of the shares, which gives them a "blocking minority" under French law. But they do



Le Monde has been pulled back from the brink but it needs another publication to strengthen its position as Europe's most highbrow newspaper

longer rule the roost, as they did in the often chaotic years after *Le Monde*'s founder, Hubert Beuve-Méry, stepped down in 1969 after 25 years as director. Staff preferred almost endless meetings about the paper's ownership and content to actually seeking the news. Daily sales slumped to 260,000 in the mid-1980s.

M. Beuve-Méry had made *Le Monde* France's paper of reference. "It's not true until it's in *Le Monde*", cynical Parisians would say in the stormy days of the Republic. Its prestige declined as bankruptcy loomed.

M. Colombani, who proved himself capable of controlling 300

highly opinionated staffers, says the paper is closer to "left-wing values", but that he has no illusions about the Socialist, who tapped his journalists' phones regularly during the Mitterrand era.

Mitterrand's staff, in fact, regarded its chief investigative reporter Edwy Plenel as "a dangerous leftwinger". M. Colombani has named him as his deputy. M. Plenel has brought in young investigative reporters such as Hervé Gattégno, now unveiling dubious details about the financial deals being made by French oil companies in Africa.

M. Colombani says: "There would have been strong symmetry

between *Le Monde* and *L'Express*". He went after the title when the president of CGE, Jean-Marie Messier, announced his intention of selling both *L'Express* and *Le Point*.

M. Messier hoped that the sales would protect his television interests, notably the successful pay-TV channel Canal Plus. The new Socialist Government had said that it would limit television and media ownership by companies benefiting from substantial state contracts.

Still bitter, M. Colombani maintains M. Messier called off the £50 million sale of *L'Express* to him after pressure from politicians in the conservative camp, who were

anxious about the centre-left *Le Monde* strengthening its position within the French media.

Sitting for once in his Left Bank office (the main 7.30am editorial conference is a stand-up affair), M. Colombani could barely contain his anger. "Big business in France considers the press a means of trafficking influence or as a plaything. We wanted to create an independent group, but that seems impossible in France."

M. Messier's office denied these accounts. His spokeswoman, while admitting that there had been "a mad week of typically Parisian and French rumours" before the non-sale, added that *Le Monde*'s offer

had not been financially viable and had not been accepted by *L'Express* journalists. However, M. Colombani made a tactical error when he said that he would have fired the Editor of *L'Express* had the deal been finalised. *L'Express* journalists do not have the final say in ownership matters like their *Le Monde* colleagues, but they feared for their future and voted against a sale to *Le Monde*.

The *L'Express* setback was M. Colombani's first serious reverse since 1993, when he was elected director by the staff after ten years of decline linked to mismanagement and constant internal bickering. The title means both editor-in-chief and managing director.

M. Colombani revealed an ability to attract new shareholders. He convinced a number of big French firms that it was good for their image to have a small stake in the paper. Other stakes of about 2 per cent each are now held by Italy's *La Stampa*, Canal Plus, Switzerland's Edipress and the Barclay brothers' European Press Holdings. This year, says M. Colombani, the profit will be "very satisfactory, and will continue for the next few years".

In the past, journalists at *Le Monde* have uncovered some scandals, such as the sinking of the Greenpeace ship *Rainbow Warrior*, but they are still held back by the tightest privacy laws in Europe. The investigative reporter M. Gattégno says he never reveals the names of mistresses. "I expose how one power group interacts with another. But I believe that details of private lives must be protected, although I realise that if you are a wrongdoer and give money and objects to your mistress then you have a certain protection."

The other old habit is looking to the Government for handouts. Even M. Colombani, anxious as he is to preserve his independence, thinks the Government should subsidise newspapers seeking diversification into multimedia. The Government already gives some £1 billion a year in various subsidies — notably tax breaks and special postage tariffs.

Having failed to buy *L'Express*, M. Colombani realises that he must diversify if *Le Monde*'s recovery is to be sustained. "I'm looking for partnerships with other press groups," he says.

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مكتبة النور

The voice of choice all over the Middle East

Michael Binyon looks at the influence of the BBC Arabic Service over the past 60 years

Largely ignored by those who pay for it, one of the world's most influential radio stations has been celebrating 60 years of broadcasting from London. With an audience running into millions, an authority unparalleled in the Middle East and an extraordinary hold on the kings, presidents, generals and statesmen who regularly tune in, the BBC Arabic Service can claim to have done more to influence the turbulent politics of the region than any other news medium.

The BBC World Service broadcasts in Arabic for 17 hours a day — more than in any other language. It is the biggest, oldest and arguably most crucial of all the 40 or more language services that beam Britain's voice to the world from Bush House.

It has also suffered more political pressure, more outrage and more challenges to the independence of the BBC than any of the other language services. The refusal by the Arabic Service to bow to the intense pressure from Anthony Eden's Government to broadcast propaganda during the Suez crisis in 1956 was a defining point in the long history of the entire BBC to assert its impartiality and editorial independence from the Government. What the Arabic Service did in 1956 still carries weight in how the BBC conducts its relations with the Government.

The service started in 1938, when Britain still ruled Palestine and Iraq under a United Nations mandate and had extensive interests in the Arab Near East. The first broadcast was introduced by Sir John Reith, the BBC's Director-General. Around the Arab world, leaders were alerted to

listen to the first announcement of "Hana London" (London Calling), which has been the station's call sign ever since.

Editorial independence was challenged from the start. The first news bulletin included a report that the British authorities had handed an Arab in Palestine for possession of a rifle and ammunition. The Foreign Office complained, alarmed at the effect of such news on the Arab world, and called for "selection and omission of news". Sir John refused, and so began establishing a reputation for impartiality and credibility.

This was often extremely difficult, given the crises that regularly shook Britain's relations with the region: the founding of Israel in 1948, Suez, the Black September civil war in Jordan, the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and more recently the Gulf War. But it has been, especially during such crises that Arabs have tuned in to their millions, coming to the reluctant conclusion that Nasser's "Voice of the Arabs" was unreliable and that many other local stations were poorly informed. A survey conducted soon after the Six Day War in 1967 found that despite the anger directed against the West for what was seen as partiality towards Israel, the BBC was the more widely trusted source of news, with a commanding lead in audiences over all other Western external broadcasters.

The formula has been the tested recipe for BBC success elsewhere: sober news programmes, topical commentary, up-to-date analyses with a mix of sport, music, drama and items of particular interest to the Arab world — Koranic readings or explanations of Arab proverbs. Broad-



The young King Hussein was among Arab leaders who ensured that their views spread from Rabat to the Gulf via Bush House

casters are always native speakers, and the service decided early on to stick to modern literary Arabic and avoid regional dialects. The formula has had to become more jazy to keep pace with the growing competition, especially from commercial successes such as Radio Monte Carlo or the more sophisticated Arab stations. The first translated talks by British orientalists have long gone, as have talks by former British ambassadors and the staid projections of British life.

A key question has always been control. The BBC language services are funded directly by the Foreign Office, and in times of crisis have been used — by agreement — to broadcast urgent messages; for example, during operations to evacuate Britons caught in civil wars. During the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, when Britain had to show that

it was impartial, Edward Heath, the Prime Minister, ordered the Arabic service to broadcast his statement that Britain would seek a ceasefire without discussion of who started the fighting. It went out that same evening.

There have been lapses: Palestinian announcers, upset by the 1970 civil war in Jordan, delivered the news in a way that made clear their anger at King Hussein; the subsequent inquiry called for much stricter monitoring. Another time a tape of a Koranic reading was played backwards for some time before the studio noticed.

Almost every Arab leader has denounced the Arabic Service at different times: President Sadat of Egypt tried jamming and threatened to take action against all Egyptians working for the BBC because of a report of an abortive coup; more recently the Saudis were angered at the

prominence given to the views of dissident exiles. But increasingly, any Arab leader wanting to make his views known from Morocco to the Gulf will ensure that his message is broadcast on the BBC. The service receives 40,000 letters a year from listeners. Many local stations rely for news about their own countries on the BBC. And a

huge outcry went up when the broadcast hours were cut back in the 1980s (now restored). For its anniversary celebrations last Saturday, the studios of Bush House were linked up live with Amman, Doha, Sana'a, Cairo, Damascus, Tunis and Rabat. Such an accolade to a Western broadcaster would have been unthinkable even a decade ago.

Let cornflakes do the talking

Britannic tries a novel way to address staff. Raymond Snoddy reports

Yesterday the Britannic Assurance group did something it had never done before — it advertised on national television. The Midlands-based company's promotional efforts used to concentrate on the press, the sides of buses and, in recent years, on sponsorship of the county cricket championship. Now Britannic, a company founded in 1866, has decided to join the marketing revolution.

The 3½-minute advertisement shown on GMTV, the commercial breakfast station, at 8.14 yesterday was unusual in another way: it was aimed at only 4,000 people, its staff. The company worked out that it would probably be less expensive, and certainly less inconvenient, to use television to reach its employees rather than trying to bring them all together in a venue such as the National Exhibition Centre.

So staff, who had been begging Britannic for years to advertise on TV like most of its rivals, were asked to watch the ad at home or in the office. They were even sent mock cereal packets with the message: "Enjoy the delicious taste of cornflakes while you enjoy the first ever Britannic TV commercial."

Apart from the advertisement, which will be at the centre of a £4 million national TV and press campaign, the broadcast was designed to introduce employees to the company's new logo and corporate identity, one of the most extensive marketing "makeovers" of recent years.

The task was carried out by Team Saatchi, the multi-disciplinary advertising organisation that became involved with Britannic three years ago, mainly to advise on internal communication. From there, the commission evolved into repositioning the "brand". Michael Parker, Team Saatchi's chief executive, says: "They had a set of letters that read 'Britannic Assurance' in a boring typeface."

As he came to know the company better, Mr Parker realised that Britannic had a

face-to-face relationship with its clients, one that was sometimes handed down from parent to child. So a member of his team came up with the image of swans, which mate for life. The commercial was shot at a swan refuge, and two stylised swans are now part of the logo, appearing on all its redesigned sales literature.

Bill Haynes, who last February became Britannic's first sales and marketing director, says: "This is the company's first concerted effort to build and develop a brand strategically. It did not fit into how Britannic wanted to portray itself in the past."



Swans: image for Britannic

In the six months to the end of June 1994, Britannic had a 21 per cent increase to £80 million, in operating profit, although it has, like many in the sector, faced problems over personal pensions. Britannic has set aside £150 million to meet possible compensation claims for mis-selling personal pensions. In July it suspended its sales force for a week to check their level of training.

Mr Haynes maintains that the new identity and advertising campaign is unrelated to such problems and points out that Britannic has never been fined or censured.

Mr Parker believes that one of the purposes of advertising is to make employees feel good about their company. "The knowledge that they were going on TV has already changed the dynamic," he says. And the dynamic will change further, because as well as going on national TV for the first time, Britannic also glided away yesterday from its headquarters in Solihull to modern premises on the outskirts of Birmingham.

Time's up for ITV's big three

EXPECT to see ITV's new big three — the chief executive Richard Eyre, the director of programming David Liddiment and the commercial and marketing director John Hardie — all over the media next week as the "100 days" of analysis and strategic planning, instigated by Eyre when he joined from Capital Radio, comes to an end.

First signs of the trio's 100-day manifesto are that its thrust will be a pledge to attack the BBC's audience share rather than commercial rivals, and to put an end to infighting between the three major ITV advertising sales groupings: Carlton UK Sales (representing Carlton and Central), Laser sales (Granada, Yorkshire Tyne-Tees, LWT and Border) and TSMS, owned by United News and Media (Meridian, Anglia, Westcountry, ITV, UTV, Scottish, Grampian and S4C).

The pledge comes in part as a response to calls from the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising that ITV's Network Centre be more accountable. Eyre will commit to increasing audience share against the BBC, particularly in crucial demographic groups. Britain's advertisers are obsessed with the 16 to 34-year-old target market, despite the increased spending power of the so-called grey market. ITV may well increase its share of the over-55s, but this will not satisfy them. ITV has shown it can compete on sport with its Formula One and FA Cup coups; now it must commission its own *This Life*, or import a *Friends*, *ER* or *Murder One*. These are shows that grow beyond a cult following and are watched by just the high-spending young audience ITV's advertisers desire.

Stefano Hatfield

A cultural change is required in programming and advertising sales. Individual commissioning editors must have permission to risk failure. And when a programme has potential (*London Bridge*) it must not be oversanctified in pursuit of mass ratings. And there is little chance of changing ITV's culture while the sales houses continue to price airtime according to the convoluted "station average price system" based on an individual station's share of total ITV viewing.

Station average price is a franchise's total monthly advertising revenue divided by its average audience. Media buying agencies try to obtain discounts against the price for their clients by pledging to spend a greater percentage of their clients' total television budget with a station than that station's share of total ITV viewing merits.

Still with me? It is clear that with all clients expecting discounts, agencies are tempted to overpromise. In turn, sales houses fail to deliver the promised audience ratings and pledge ever bigger discounts in return for share. It has even

been known for some ITV sales people to encourage agencies to spend money beyond ITV to keep up their station's ITV share. Why not if you are bonused on your share of ITV?

If radical initiatives are really taken next week to bring ITV together in the way the ad community wants — such as biting the bullet and moving *News at Ten* or scrapping station average price — ITV has a good chance of rejuvenating itself. If not, despite their honourable intentions, its talented new trio may have to content themselves with managing long-term decline.

THE 1997 winner of *Campaign* magazine's advertising agency of the year is St Luke's, which has shown that you can be different and thrive in the London marketplace.

Born of the ashes of Chiat Day, when the staff refused to accept a takeover by TBWA, St Luke's was set up two years ago as adland's first workers' co-operative. The agency did not lose a major client and had a stunning first year doing innovative work for the likes of Eurostar, Boots cosmetics and Ikea.

And 1997 was even better. St Luke's won important new business, notably the Labour Government's Welfare to Work campaign and a place on the Coca-Cola and United Distillers' rosters. There was outstanding work for Ikea, Radio 1 and Clark's shoes, among others. The agency continued to ignore conventions about structure, declined to share the industry's obsession with awards and split itself into smaller units, moving from traditional advertising into such areas as documentary making.

Stefano Hatfield is Editor of *Campaign*.



ITV scored with *The Bill* and *London's Burning*; now it needs some *Friends*

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EDUCATION

Don Foster, the Liberal Democrat education spokesman, on his plans for a new curriculum

Back to the real basics

Will the education system of the future provide the necessary keys to learning and deliver excellence for all?

I am not convinced — not based on the evidence of the past 100 years. As our manufacturing economy developed a century ago, so too did a system of formal schooling based on then successful industrial business models. Formal learning in schools became a largely abstract activity based on production-line techniques, separating children from the community at large and the informal learning that used to take place within it.

In reality our education system has changed little in the past 100 years. All we have done is to tinker. Yet the system will change because it must — it is failing the nation. More than 12,000 children were excluded from school last year; one in nine left school without any formal qualification; half our adults lack the necessary reading skills to use a bus timetable.

David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, said last July: "To overcome economic and social disadvantage, and to make equality of opportunity a reality, we must eliminate — and never excuse — underachievement in the most deprived parts of our country."

Who could disagree? Yet our education system — despite all the tinkering over the past 18 years — has merely helped to perfect failure. And while the production-line model of schooling may be reasonably good at developing basic skills (though, as we know from literacy and numeracy scores, not that good), it does little to promote social, practical and problem-solving skills; little to develop creativity, enterprise or collaborative working.

What we need — but haven't got — was summed up recently by Singapore's Prime Minister, who said: "What is critical is that we fire in our students a passion for learning, instead of them studying for the sake of getting good grades in their examinations. It is the capacity to learn that will define excellence in the future, not simply what young people learn in school."

The system will also change because rapid developments in information and communication technologies will force change upon us. But keeping



The challenge facing us is to develop an education system that is truly inclusive — from the cradle to the grave

up will be difficult. The Government's plans for a National Grid for Learning already look dated.

Technological developments will force our education to change or simply be overtaken. And the education system will change because we know so much more about how people learn. We can now back up with research findings what the Ancient Chinese knew intuitively: "Tell me, and I forget; show me, and I remember; let me do and I understand."

Yet we continue to promote a failed education system based on an insupportable approach to learning. So what can we do? As we move towards the next millennium, the greatest challenge facing us all is to develop a system that is truly inclusive, from the cradle to the grave. We must not do the same things better, we must do them differently.

An inclusive system means starting early. Research shows that the best time for learning is at a very early age, from birth to three, when children are with their parents. So local authorities, working with the health service, must focus more attention on supporting parents — acknowledging that parents are, at all stages in a child's life, the primary educators, who deserve and need more support.

In order to boost early years provision, we should provide funding for three as well as four-year-olds. And, above all, we should start to treat the early years as a distinct phase within the education system. An early years key stage should be established.

An inclusive education system also means one in which each of the phases within it is fairly funded. If there is to be little in the way of significant extra funding, then we should

re-evaluate our priorities in the allocation of existing funds to ensure maximum effect.

We must question why, for example, we accept larger classes and less preparation time for teachers in primary than in secondary schools. If there is no extra money for primary schools, then we should consider reallocation of some secondary school funding to them.

Nor can we continue the huge disparities in funding for each post-16 student depending on whether provision is made in school sixth forms or colleges. There needs to be far greater commonality of funding and hard decisions will have to be made to achieve it.

Inclusivity will also mean treating educators — teachers and lecturers — as professionals. Of course, such an approach would bring with it reciprocal responsibilities. Teachers and lecturers alike need to look anew at what it means not just to be treated as a professional, but to be one.

We must fire in our students a passion for learning

Towns, gowns and unpalatable truths

Oxbridge is not a public school closed shop. It just wants academic self-starters, says Martin Stephen

This year independent schools have yet again provided nearly half the successful applicants for Oxford and Cambridge. As a result the Left shrieks "unfair advantage" and demands quotas, while the Right damns the failure of comprehensives to deliver the academic goods. The fuss made over these figures is often cynical and wholly hypocritical. Who goes to Oxbridge is a revelation of two separate truths.

The first truth concerns the nature of the world's great universities. No one who deals regularly with admissions to Oxford or Cambridge can doubt the sincere commitment on the part of those universities to being a meritocracy. They would like nothing more than to admit more pupils from the state sector. Yet the great universities of the world — Harvard and Yale, the Sorbonne, Oxford and Cambridge — are not teaching institutions. They exist for research; undergraduate teaching is merely a way of paying the research bills.

They do not have the resources to make up for a candidate's lack of knowledge. They cannot do the job the school should have done. Those who apply to them have to hit the first year running. Oxford and Cambridge admit those best qualified to cope with the demanding courses they offer. It is not their fault that the independent sector provides proportionately more of these candidates.

The failure is not that of Oxford or Cambridge, but of the education system that deals with 95 per cent of the school population. Oxford and Cambridge must be left free to accept candidates who will best cope with the courses on offer. If a disproportionate number of those candidates come from the independent sector, then the answer lies

with Government. Equally clearly, Government has two options if it seriously wants to open up access to Oxford and Cambridge. Neither is exclusive.

First, it could acknowledge the need in all schools for an academic fast lane. It should heap praise on the large number of comprehensive schools and sixth-form colleges which have recognised this fact. It should encourage more to do so. Like all roads, this fast lane needs funding. It also needs a change of attitude.

Perhaps most of all, it needs Government to think the unthinkable. Independent schools succeed at Ox-

bridge in part because they can recruit excellent graduate teachers. These teachers choose to teach in independent schools because in so doing, they know they will not be required to teach those with no interest in academic achievement. Is it not time that the maintained sector of education was allowed to recruit specialist academic teachers who would only be asked to teach children with academic aspirations? The Health Service has GPs, and it has consultants. The comprehensive sector needs its consultants, just as it needs its GPs.

Secondly, Government should recognise the expertise that the independent sector has in teaching and training pupils for Oxbridge. If a fair price can be agreed, it should buy in those services for pupils whose schools cannot provide them. Yet Oxford and Cambridge also need to think the unthinkable. Many parents with children in the independent sector have a vision of the university hierarchy that dates back many years. In that hierarchy, Oxford and Cambridge are at the top. Bristol comes next. Durham and Exeter offer socially acceptable alternatives. The parent must imprint on the child. As a result, a far higher proportion of pupils in independent schools aspire to Oxbridge.

This is at odds with the vision of many pupils whose families do not have a tradition of university entry. For these young people, Oxford and Cambridge are very dull. Cambridge is a small market town in the wilderness of Fenlands. Its clubbing scene is non-existent, its soccer club hopeless and college life there is claustrophobic.

Where is the excitement? Somewhere like Nottingham or Birmingham. A huge, purpose-built campus means that everyone is guaranteed accommodation in the first year. At the same time, the student has access to all the excitement of the big city whenever he or she wishes. There is the excitement of a vast social mix, from Eton to Grange Hill. Finally there are the courses — designed by lecturers who have listened to their students and increasingly based on negotiation with employers about what they really want.

Oxford and Cambridge have failed to realise that young people brought up in the hard school of comprehensive education fail to see why the Oxbridge cake is worth the candle.

Dr Stephen is High Master of Manchester Grammar School.

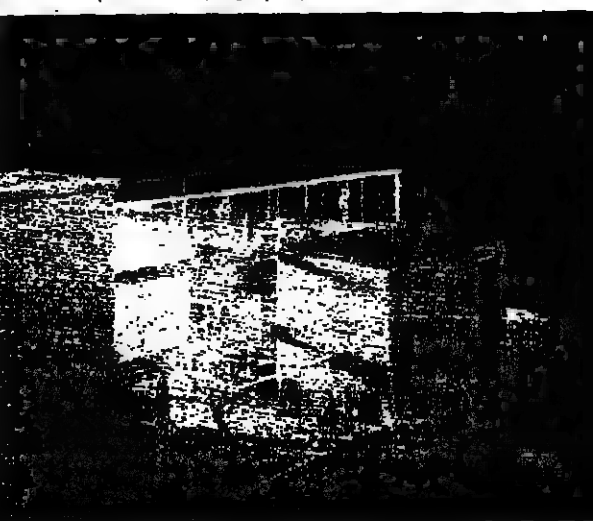
Cambridge is a small market town in the wilderness

Challenging dyslexia

Ronnie Corbett is leading the fight to build a new special school in London. David Charter reports



Above: Mr Corbett; below: how the school should look



The comedian Ronnie Corbett is spearheading a campaign to create the first day school for teenage dyslexics in London, after struggling to find help for his own dyslexic grandson.

Emma Corbett's search for suitable schooling for her son Thomas highlighted the shortage of places available for children who need intensive help, and whose families do not want to send them away to board.

The Moat School, a £17 million project in Fulham, south-west London, has been gaining momentum over the past year, but is still struggling to reach its goal of opening this September.

It has a site — a disused former secondary school — and is in the process of recruiting a head teacher. It has big plans for a dyslexia research centre and bursaries to help parents who are unable to afford its fees. But organisers of the Constable Educational Trust, which is behind the scheme, know it could all still founder without a final fundraising push now.

In all, the trust has raised £700,000. In December it was offered a further £250,000, provided it could raise matching funds between then and the end of this month. So far just £40,000 has been found.

Ronda Fogel, co-founder of the trust, says: "We are having meetings upon meetings upon meetings. The school will eventually be for 100 pupils aged 11 to 16, starting with 30 in its first year. But with 40 children on our database already, that is the least of our problems."

The trust has an impressive list of patrons alongside Ronnie Corbett. Including Lord Rogers of Riverside, Anthea Turner and Jeremy Irons.

A vigilant nursery teacher spotted Thomas Corbett's dyslexia when Thomas was just four years old and having difficulty with the alphabet. But even with the great advan-

tage of having his condition known early, his primary years have been split between mainstream school and a specialist unit which is an hour's drive away from his mother's house.

Now Thomas is nine-and-a-half, his grandfather is fully aware of how difficult it is to find secondary school places. "Thomas went to a primary

school near where my daughter lives and had some help for his dyslexia, but it is never really enough," Ronnie Corbett says. "We decided it would be worth going to a proper place for two or three years, so he is equipped to return to mainstream school. We found a small unit and he is driven to it every day. Fortunately we can afford to

take him there, because without that he would be lost. "People are recognising what dyslexia is, that these children are not stupid. We all had children in our schools who had dyslexia but it was probably not recognised. I remember a boy in my class who used to pretend that his eyesight was going to avoid reading aloud, and now I realise that he was probably suffering from dyslexia."

Ronda Fogel was a co-founder of the trust two-and-a-half years ago. When she learned that the Diocesan Board of London could make a school building available. It was originally her dream to start a school that her dyslexic daughter, now 14, could attend, but the Moat School will not be ready in time.

"My daughter is at boarding school and wants to come back, but I would not move her now," she says. "Unfortunately the school will not be for her, but hopefully it will be there for future generations. We are doing this because there is a desperate need in London, and we all believe in the project."

Thomas will be a candidate for admittance to the school, provided the project becomes reality. But is this the right time to be building a specialist school for dyslexics, when the general thrust of government policy is to integrate such children into normal classes?

Ronnie Corbett is in no doubt. "Until they have proved themselves strong enough to handle a normal classroom curriculum and routine, it seems to me best to have full-time specialist teaching," he says.

"I do not agree with putting dyslexic children into a normal class and assuming they will catch up. There are just not enough specialist secondary schools for the number of children who suffer from dyslexia."

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Further details are available from the Headmistress' Secretary at Ternwood School, Cranley Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 2JD, telephone 01483 573101. Please apply in strict confidence by sending your CV (with details of relevant experience, latest remuneration, name, address and telephone numbers of three referees, and date of birth), quoting reference TBS98, to the Chairman of Governors at the address above, by return no later than 23rd January 1998. We will contact you by 31st March 1998.



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FOOTBALL: BERTI MAY MAKE SPURS DEBUT AT OLD TRAFFORD

New hope for League in battle with Uefa

By Russell Kempson

MANY of the FA Carling Premiership's senior clubs have viewed the Coca-Cola Cup with little more than contempt this season — did Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, really smile after the 2-0 third-round defeat at Ipswich Town? — but there will be no more disrespect.

Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool and Middlesbrough, the semi-finalists, will be treating the competition with every seriousness as the final at Wembley beckons.

It is possible, too, that a place in the Uefa Cup next season will await the winners on March 29. Uefa, the sport's European governing body, may have decreed that the prize no longer exists, but the Football League, which has taken its case to the European Commission in Brussels, is still optimistic that it will be reinstated. "We continue to be very hopeful that good sense will prevail," Andy Williamson, the League's assistant secretary, said yesterday.

At a meeting of Uefa's executive committee next month, the matter will be discussed again. "Uefa have indicated that they will reconsider their decision," Williamson said.

"It could be that if the European Commission was to find in our favour, Uefa would not only be put in a bad light but it could also have wider long-term implications for them."

As the lawyers huddle together and the bureaucrats battle through the inevitable tape, the semi-finalists will get down to work in the first match of the two-legged ties later this month. The draw on Wednesday night paired Arsenal with Chelsea and Liverpool with Middlesbrough.

SEMI-FINAL DRAW: Arsenal v Chelsea, Liverpool v Middlesbrough. First leg to be played on Wednesday night, second leg, week starting February 16.

Hinchcliffe's move to Tottenham foiled by injury

By Matt Dickinson

EVEN the prospect of signing for Tottenham Hotspur appears enough to induce injury these days, with Andy Hinchcliffe's proposed £3 million transfer from Everton collapsing unexpectedly yesterday when an Achilles problem was revealed.

With personal terms agreed and the England full back about to have a medical in London, his agent told Tottenham of the surprise setback.

"It is a disappointment," Christian Gross, the Tottenham head coach, said "because I had an excellent feeling when I spoke with Andy. He wanted to join us."

Gross claimed that the deal may be resurrected in a few weeks if the injury clears, and disappointment at White Hart Lane was tempered by the completion of the signing of Nicola Bert, the international midfielder player, on a free transfer.

Bert, 30, will travel with the Tottenham squad for the game against Manchester United tomorrow and Gross, who must cope without the usual high quota of invalids for the trip to Old Trafford

admitted that he may gamble on playing the Italy international, who has 25 caps.

It would be a considerable risk given that Bert has made just four appearances as a substitute in Serie A this season and has struggled through injuries for the past couple of years, including an operation to repair knee ligaments.

Like Jürgen Klinsmann, who signed from Sampdoria last month, Bert's career in Italy has turned for the worse and he is hoping that success with Tottenham can rekindle fading hopes of appearing in the World Cup finals in France this summer.

Klinsmann was instrumental in signing his former international team-mate, making the initial approach at Gross's request, and he believes the dynamic midfielder player has exactly the qualities that Tottenham need in their struggle at the foot of the FA Carling Premiership, particularly with Alan Nielsen out with a broken bone in his ankle until next month.

The signing of Bert, and Klinsmann, is proof of a policy

to tackle the short-term problems at Tottenham and Gross admits that he is not looking further at present than to try to lift the club from relegation trouble.

Wimbledon have completed the signing of Carl Leaburn from Charlton Athletic for a fee of £150,000. The 27-year-old striker has been on a weekly contract at The Valley.

He is a natural targetman who will suit us perfectly," Joe Kinner, the Wimbledon manager, said. His new recruit could see action straight away, against Liverpool tomorrow.

West Bromwich Albion have confirmed their interest in Matt Carbon and are preparing a bid approaching £1 million for the Derby County defender, who would become Denis Smith's first signing as the Albion manager (Richard Hobson writes). Smith targeted a left-sided central defender as among his priorities shortly after arriving at The Hawthorns two weeks ago.

Carbon, an England Under-21 international who has also played up front, was instrumental in helping Derby to secure promotion to the FA Carling Premiership, but has struggled against injuries over the past two seasons. The emergence of Steve Elliott has left Jim Smith, the Derby manager, with a surplus of defenders competing for three places.

Derby themselves have opted not to pursue their interest in Stéphane Roche, a midfielder player from Lyons, who has been training with the club.

Nottingham Forest have taken Christian Edwards on trial from Swansea City with a view to signing the Wales international defender for £200,000.

World Cup teams to warm up in Dublin

IRELAND will play Mexico, World Cup qualifiers, in Dublin on May 23. Ireland, who narrowly failed to qualify for the finals in France, are also hoping to arrange a game against Yugoslavia at Lansdowne Road on April 22.

and Antoine Sibierski, of Auxerre.

Tommy Johnson's proposed move to Crystal Palace from Celtic on loan has been held up by a disagreement about the length of the loan.

Manchester United have changed the kick-off time of their match against Bolton Wanderers at Old Trafford to 7.30pm. The match is the day after the fourth anniversary of the Munich air disaster.

FA to hear Newcastle complaint today

By Russell Kempson

NEWCASTLE United's objections to having to play their FA Cup fourth-round tie against Stevenage Borough at Broadhall Way, the Vauxhall Conference club's tiny ground, will be considered by the Football Association at the Herfordshire club at noon, with a decision expected later in the day.

Although Stevenage have increased the capacity from 6,600 to 8,000 for the game, on January 25, Newcastle officials were still dissatisfied after inspecting the ground on Wednesday. In a statement, they said that Broadhall Way would be

"totally unacceptable, bearing in mind the immense interest in the tie and the anticipated level of support from Newcastle fans for this match."

Originally, the FA showed little concern. "We are happy for the match to go ahead as it was drawn," Steve Double, a spokesman, said. After Newcastle said they would appeal, the FA said it would look at their observations. "It is not embarrassing to us because it is within the rules," Double said.

More than 70 per cent of those who took part in a telephone poll on Tyneside said the match should take place at Stevenage. John Regan, secretary of the Newcastle Independent Supporters' Association, said yesterday: "The whole thing has turned into a farce and all this bickering is taking the gloss off the tie for Stevenage. The Newcastle board have gone completely over the top with their objections. As far as the supporters are concerned, Stevenage were first out of the hat. It is their home tie, they have a safety certificate and that should be that."

Boatman holed by her putter

By John Hopkins
GOLF CORRESPONDENT

IN THE long history of the President's Putter there have been days when the wind roared over Rye's distinguished links with a greater vengeance than it did yesterday, and days when more milestones in this competition were passed. There cannot have been many, however.

Hitherto, only three men have played more than 100 matches in this competition. Martin Yates, the 55-year-old chief executive of the Roehampton Club in London, joined this select band yesterday morning and then completed his 101st match when he was beaten by another old Tonbridgean, Simon Ellis, in the afternoon.

It was an auspicious day for Alex Boatman, the daughter of Liz, the Carling Cup captain in 1992 and 1994, who became only the second woman to be welcomed into this male stronghold and, sadly, lost on her debut. No less for Peter Gracey, still limping, still carrying his bag as a defiant rejection of advancing age, became, at the age of 76, the first man to compete in 50 consecutive Putters.

Gracey, three up after four holes, was later visited by

Results from Rye 45

what he calls "the staggers", a form of torture that prevents him from completing his backswing. Having got the club halfway back, he then gets stuck and has to have another bash. Gracey surrendered on the 16th green to Rob Randall, holding his arms up and waving his white handkerchief.

All this and more came on the day when Ted Dexter was two up with two to play only to be knocked out at the first extra hole. At the 19th, Dexter sank for a birdie four, a putt he described as being "the length of a cricket pitch". When the former captain of England describes a putt in such terms there is no arguing.

Then Richard Mares, his opponent and a man 40 years younger, sank his putt, estimated at 55 feet, to win the match.

The hope was expressed in these columns yesterday that a proper wind would blow accompanied by a scattering of rain. Members of the Oxford and Cambridge Golfing Society celebrating their centenary deserved no less than a proper test of their fortitude and skill. The request could scarcely have been answered better. The climatic conditions even brought a smile to the cheeks of Peter Bathurst,



Boatman plays an elegant iron shot on the first fairway in the President's Putter

one of the Society's wind of 25-30mph, force six on the Beaufort Scale, is officially known as a strong breeze. Out on the course it felt stronger, as indeed it was when it was gusting to nearly 40mph, a moderate gale. Boatman was almost blown off her feet on the pulpit-like fifth tee.

"I can't wait for another go," Boatman, 26, said a couple of hours after she had lost to Steve Sharpe, a Blue in 1977. "I'm annoyed. I don't mean that to sound ungrateful but my most enjoyable rounds before have been

when I have won. On the first tee I was excited and petrified. If I had lost 10 and everyone would have said 'see, women's golf, huh!'

There was as much pressure on Sharpe's behalf as on Boatman's. The distinction of having been beaten by a woman. "She strikes the ball better than I do," Sharpe said graciously, after winning 3 and 2, having been one down at the turn.

Women competing in this event must play from the same tees as the men. Boatman was only a few yards behind her opponent after most drives. Where she

found herself in difficulty was on the short holes. "I'd have a long iron and I'd be playing something like a five. On the fifth for example I could hardly find my head and hit one of the worst shots of my life."

Boatman, lost, however, not because she was overpowered but because she could not putt. She admitted to three-putting at least seven times, covering her face with her hand in embarrassment. "It's been brilliant, though," she said before she returned to Marlborough where she teaches Classics.

SWIMMING

Britons to benefit from fresh incentives

FROM CRAIG LORD IN PERTH

A LONDON businessman arrived here for the world championships yesterday and pledged a £7,000 prize to be shared by British swimmers reaching finals or breaking national records. The generosity of Simon Lefevre, who works for a leading financial institution in the City, prompted a delighted Deryk Snelling, the national performance director for swimming, to call for the National Lottery to provide prize-money incentives in future.

Lefevre, who has privately sponsored swimmers for several years, said he hoped his offer would encourage the British team and lead to other individuals and companies investing in swimming.

British sponsorship pales by comparison with support for Australian swimmers, who will receive about A\$1 million (£400,000) between them in the lead-up to the Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000.

Snelling said: "The prize-money available in Australia has made the squad more aggressive. They recognise they get makes them train harder and race harder. It is seen as a just reward for their commitment and attracts many youngsters into the sport."

Pool events at the championships start on Monday. At a mock competition of abnormal distances against Canada, James Hickman, of Stockport, clocked 1min 25sec, just 1sec down on world-record pace for the 200 metres in which he is the world short-course champion.

RUGBY LEAGUE: RFL CHIEF EXECUTIVE RESIGNS TO ACCEPT ROLE MASTERMINDING MARKETING OF SUPER LEAGUE CLUBS

Lindsay's switch sparks fears of a breakaway

By Christopher Irvine



Lindsay: controversy

THE eventful career of Maurice Lindsay at the Rugby Football League (RFL) took another colourful twist yesterday with the first of several announcements that he had resigned as chief executive after five years.

His resignation was accepted at a board meeting on Wednesday — the RFL refused to say whether he had been asked to leave — and Lindsay immediately accepted a position as managing director of Super League Europe (SLE), the marketing arm of the 12 Super League clubs. An initial statement by Sir Rodney Walker, the RFL chairman, said that Lindsay had taken up his new duties and that he wished him well.

However, in a subsequent statement, Sir Rodney said: "The proposed

move by Maurice Lindsay to a position with Super League Europe is to be the subject of a debate at a special general meeting of clubs on January 16."

The meeting was demanded by lower-division clubs to discuss terms of his move to SLE. With the appointment of Lindsay, the broker of the original Super League deal, the fear is of a breakaway, which could starve first and second-division clubs of funding by The News Corporation, parent company of *The Times* and the Super League backers. Another difficulty is that some of the elite clubs had not given their approval.

It is unlikely that the smaller clubs could block Lindsay's move, which has had to be put on hold until after the meeting a week today. However, their fears of a shift in the running of the game at the top end could be proved

right as Lindsay, together with Colin Myler, the SLE chief executive, look to reposition the Super League after two difficult seasons.

Lindsay said: "I now wish to focus fully on Super League. I was obviously one of the original architects of Super League when it was founded in 1995, but events in Australia made it difficult to complete the task. Super League is quite obviously the flagship of rugby league and its success is vital to the future of the game."

With Lindsay between jobs, his RFL deputy, Neil Runncliffe, has stepped in as acting chief executive for three months. He is a front-runner for the vacancy. Pressure for Lindsay's resignation reached its height during the club mergers debate in 1995 but has been renewed several times since.

Although his powers were curtailed

last year and a restructured board put in place there is little doubt that, with the move to SLE, Lindsay will be as influential as in the past, first during Wigan's rise in the Eighties and then as a ruthless visionary at the RFL, where he succeeded David Oxley as chief executive in November 1992.

Last year was far from triumphant for Lindsay, with the world club championship an embarrassing, one-sided flop. His place on the international board became untenable when Super League in Australia and the rival Australian Rugby League made peace last month.

As the Super League continues its search for a title sponsor, Lindsay's appointment is a timely one three months before the league season. "His experience in the sport will be of immense benefit to us," Myler said.

CRICKET: KENYA SEEK TO CHANGE RESULT OF ONE-DAY INTERNATIONAL AS SRI LANKA CONTROL KANDY TEST

England A tour squelches to halt

ENGLAND A may have played their last game on this tour of Kenya (a Special Correspondent writes). Persistent heavy rain throughout the night and into the morning meant that the three-day match here at Ruwara was abandoned as a draw shortly before lunch on the third and final day. Now the third one-day international, scheduled for Saturday, is in doubt.

Originally planned for the ground of the Nairobi club, it was transferred to the Gynkana, where the outfield now qualifies as a wetland area, before being rearranged for Ruwara, where the groundstaff need a day of sun and breeze to have any chance of producing playable conditions.

The players have been trying to keep fit with games of

football and visits to the gym. Dougie Brown, the Warwickshire all-rounder, who has arrived to replace Chris Silverwood, and wicketkeeper David Nash were due to guest for the English club side Romany, who are on tour here, but that fixture, too, was washed out.

England are still awaiting the official outcome of the second one-day international played last Sunday. The match refers, Jasmer Singh, declared England the winners but the Kenya board has lodged an appeal, claiming that the wrong calculations had been used. A response from the England and Wales Cricket Board is expected and there is every chance that the issue will be resolved today. Kenya could yet be celebrating a posthumous victory.

Foot-sore Donald to play on

ALLAN DONALD, the South Africa fast bowler, has been cleared to play in the World Series Cup one-day international against New Zealand in Brisbane tomorrow after bone scans on a sore foot proved inconclusive.

Donald, who has supplanted Hugh Tayfield as South Africa's leading wicket-taker during the Test series with Australia, will have further tests. "There's no definite fracture, but certainly in that area there is plenty of wear and tear," Alan Jordaan, the team manager, said.

Stuart Milburn, 25, Hampshire fast bowler, has retired from first-class cricket because of a shoulder injury. The Harrogate-born paceman took 39 wickets in 21 first-class matches for the county.

Atapattu joins 200 club

By Our Sports Staff

AFTER Marvan Atapattu had completed his maiden Test double-century, the Sri Lanka off spinners, Muttiah Muralitharan and Jayantha Silva, took an early wicket apiece to leave Zimbabwe struggling in the first Test in Kandy yesterday.

Atapattu made 223 of Sri Lanka's 469 for nine before Muralitharan bowled Grant Flower for four and Silva, with his third ball, won an appeal for leg-before against newcomer Murray Goodwin, who scored two.

Gavin Rennie and Andy Flower, then took Zimbabwe to 46 for two at the close on a pitch already offering assistance to the Sri Lanka spinners.

Atapattu had started the day at 129 as Sri Lanka resumed at 265 for four and lasted until six minutes before the tea interval, when he edged a leg break from Paul Strang and was

picked up at slip by Alistair Campbell.

The opening batsman's marathon innings had lasted for 597 minutes during which time he hit 29 fours and one six from 446 balls received. He is only the fifth Sri Lanka batsman to score a double-century in Test cricket.

He shared a fifth-wicket stand of 95 with Hashan Tillekeratne, who fell just before lunch for 44 when he offered a return catch to Andrew Whitnall, an off spinner, who claimed his third wicket with the help of another return catch, given by Ramesh Kaluwitharana when the wicketkeeper had scored 29. Chaminda Vaas contributed a useful 26 before Sri Lanka declared 21 minutes after tea, leaving 23 overs in which their spinners pressed home the advantage.

SRI LANKA: First innings — 8
S Y Jayasinghe b Strang 223
M S Muralitharan c Campbell 223
S P A Silva 27
A Ranasinghe b Whitnall 27
H P Tillekeratne c and b Strang 24
H S Kaluwitharana c and b Whitnall 23
W P U J C Vaas c Rennie 29
Total 469

ZIMBABWE: First innings — 46
G J Rennie not out 29
W Flower b Muralitharan 4
M W Goodwin b S Silva 2
S A Flower not out 6
Total 46

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-29, 2-36, 3-173, 4-223, 5-261, 6-265, 7-440, 8-461, 9-469.
BOWLING: Strang 34-11-65-2, S C Silva 30-7-78-0, P A Strang 35-2-10-22-2, A Whitnall 30-4-72-2, Muttiah 21-5-69-1, Goodwin 4-0-7-0.

ZIMBABWE: First innings — 23
G J Rennie not out 29
W Flower b Muralitharan 4
M W Goodwin b S Silva 2
S A Flower not out 6
Total 46

SPORT IN BRIEF

Seles forced to miss tournament

MONICA Seles, four times the winner of the Australian Open women's title, yesterday withdrew from the competition later this month citing "personal reasons". Paul McNamee, the director of the tournament, said he was unable to shed light on her withdrawal. He could not confirm whether the former world No 1's absence is connected to the health of her father and coach, Karoli, who has been suffering from stomach cancer.

THE RUN of success being enjoyed by Marwan Fattouh continued yesterday when he defeated Mike Hakel 10-2 in the qualifying competition of the Embassy world.

THE SLOVAKIA team Australia in the deciding mixed doubles rubber yesterday to claim their place in the final of the Hopman Cup mixed team tournament in Perth, Australia. France and South Africa will contest the other semi-final today.

COLONEL A. A. (Tony) Dunne, OBE, the former Walker Cup captain and chairman of selectors, has died at the age of 84. One of the most charismatic figures in the history of Welsh golf, he won the Welsh amateur championship four times between 1936 and 1954.

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might have worked, but they weren't and the resultant cobbled-together concoction was barely worthy of the *Horizon* name. So why was it there? Just a wild guess but could it be something to do with Channel 4's three-part series, *Crash*, which begins next Tuesday?

Finally, on satellite, Sky One's strategy of turning Thursday night into a real alternative to anything the terrestrial channels have to offer continues. With the latest series of *ER* already up and established, last night saw the launch of the new series of *Friends*, with an episode that took up so seamlessly from the series that recently ended on Channel 4 that nobody has had time even to try a new hairstyle. I've had problems with the opening episodes of previous *Friends* series, but this was spot-on from the start. Just don't mention jellyfish to Monica, Or Chandler, either.

CHANNEL 5

CHANNEL 5 ON SATELLITE
Channel 5 is now broadcasting on transponder No 63 on the Astra Satellite. Viewers with a Videocrypt decoder will be able to receive the channel free of charge. Frequencies for transponder No 63 are picture: 10.52075 GHz; sound: 10.70 and 7.20 MHz.

10.00am 5 News Extra (3338642)
10.00 Laughing All the Way to the Bank (3638977)
3.00 Milkshake! (7104712) 7.35 Adventure of the Bush Patrol (1) (1417847) 8.15 Havalaxo (1) (7013606)
3.00 Wildlife World: Science Rules OK! (Habitat issues are increasingly shaping our world) (3.55) 7012977
10.00 Espresso (1959422) 9.55 Cases Alive (1) (7181557) 10.30 Sunset Beach (1) (1372593)
10.00 Lecca (3013151) 12.00 5 News (12.30pm Family Affairs) (1) (1) (5780922) 1.00 The Bold and the Beautiful (1) (5780922) 1.30 What's It Good for You? (1) (7314682) 2.00 5's Company (8237257)
3.00 Broken Lullaby (1994) starring M. Harris. A genealogist tries to solve the riddle of her sun's mysterious past. Directed by Michael Kennedy (4394597)
2.00 Russell Grant's Postcards: A visit Brighton (7724522)
3.00 Exclusive (8042286)
10.00 100 Per Cent (8049196)
3.00 Family Affairs (1) (8233151)
10.00 5 News (1) (3613828)
3.00 Oasis Africa: The wildlife of Africa wetting lands (1) (8239335)



Football's Karen Brady (8.00pm)

00 Vanessa's Day With Karen Brady
Birmingham City, football's first female managing director (969246)

30 Bring Me the Head of Liza
Entertainment New series (8901053)

40 Sons of Silence (1985) starring Linda Wagner, A fact-based drama about former nun who becomes a ra
counsellor. Directed by Sam Pillsbury
(40018712)

40 La Femme Nikita (5766267)

40 Stripper (1985) starring Janette B
and Sara Costa. A documentary-style
story about the life of a strip-lease art
Jerome Gary credits (373460)

20am The Triple Echo (1973) starring

55 **Plaf: The Early Years** (1974) starring Brigitte Ariel. A celebration of the early years of the French singer. Directed by Georges Casari (5013213)

TRAVEL (CABLE)

12.00pm Traveling Lion 1.00 A-z Mac
Foyat on Italy 2.00 City of the World 2.00
Gatherings and Celebrations 3.00 Inroad
Around 3.30 Ruledly Adventure 4.30
Around Britain 4.30 Whiten in Stone 5.00
West and West 6.30 Readin from 8.00 Play
from 9.00 The World's Most Famous 2.00
Lion 8.00 No Truckin' Holiday 8.30 Tat
from the Flying Scots 8.00 Dominica; P
10.00 Gatherings and Celebrations 10.
10.00

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

4.00pm Harold Lloyd - the Third G
The Top Two (588)7.30 5.00 Biograp
The History Channel Biography 7.30
Herlow (7155248) 8.00 Cioe

CARLTON FOOD (CABLE)

Thought 1060 Grapsa Epithymia 10.00 C
What's Cooking? 11.00 Wanda Thompson
The 90's 12.00 Graham Karp & Karen Lenz
Food Network 14.12.30 GARY YU
Greens 1.00 Food for Thought 13.00 Gray
Days and Other Days 2.00 Samples
The 80's 2.30 Graham Karp & Karen Lenz
3.30 World News 3.00 1st 4th 5th Sat
Home Comed 4.30 Planet Now 6.00 C

LIVING

6.00am Thy Living 6.00 The Heat is
6.30 Thought 10.10 Jerry Springer 11.
The Young and the Restless 11.35 MYSTERY
Music and Miracles 12.25pm JAMES
Harris 12.30 1.20 2.20 3.20 4.20 5.20
2.05 Heart to Heart 3.00 Live at 5.30 Ch
6.00 Greens 5.00 Florida Live at 5.30 Ch
Cinco 6.30 Ready, Steady, Cook? 7.00
Real Estate 7.30 8.00 The Winner
6.00 Jerry Springer 9.00 FL
Dusky Messenger 11.00 The Sex Zone

ZEE TV

8.30am Kickassat Jehan 7.30 Ramona
7.30 Aq 10 Adolescent 8.00 Business! Mu
8.30 Ashra 8.30 Dasha 10.00 Yah Zay
Deewane 10.30 Crati 10.00 The Last
8.30 Ashra 8.30 Dasha 10.00 Yah Zay
Hasekron 8.30 Adah 10.00 Ramadan 4
Anashtar 8.00 Zama 6.00 Hum Pata
8.30m Lahan 7.20 10 7.29 Madi Par
8.30m 8.00 News 8.30 Madi Par
8.00 FLW

RUGBY UNION 45

Evans back in
the running for
national service

Customs find puts drugs issue back in spotlight at world championships

Swimmers put China in dock

FROM CRAIG LORD
IN PERTH

CHINESE swimmers heading for the world championships were greeted by armed guards and a media scrum when they arrived at Perth airport last night after customs officials found a flask believed to contain human growth hormone in their luggage during a routine stopover in Sydney.

The 29 swimmers and officials were not in chains, like the earliest visitors to these shores, but they were certainly in the dock, after a discovery that has cast an unwelcome cloud over a sport that is thoroughly tainted by the scourge of drug cheats.

The 26 vials in the flask, 13 of them labelled Somatotropin, a human growth hormone (HGH), and 13 of saline solution, were sent to a laboratory for testing. They were discovered in a bag belonging to Yuan Yuan, who in 1994, the year seven Chinese swimmers tested positive for anabolic steroids, had won silver and bronze medals in the two breaststroke races at the world championships in Rome.

The discovery was more by luck than design: customs officials had ordered the cases of a narcotics suspect to be searched but Yuan's bag had been opened because it was on the same transport trolley coming out of the luggage hold.

Yuan, 21, told customs that she was carrying the flask to give to a Chinese doctor who lives in Australia, while her coach at the Guangzhou army base, Zhou Zhenwen, told police that he had packed Yuan's case for her. While Yuan is the lowest-ranked woman in the China team in Perth, raised twelfth in the world over 200 metres, three of Zhou's other charges are ranked among the top two in the world in their events.

At Perth airport, Chinese coaches told Chinese TV that the vials contained no more than "turtle jelly", but customs officials at Sydney stated: "The suspected growth hormones have yet to be analysed... customs is continuing inquiries into the incident to determine what action to take."

That could mean a fine of up



Yuan is escorted to the China team bus by officers at Perth airport yesterday after the discovery of a flask in her luggage raised suspicions

to A\$50,000 (£20,000), though a first offence of importing a prohibited substance such as HGH usually results in a warning letter, a spokesman for the Australian Customs Service said.

Beyond national law, there are also swimming laws to consider, and should the vials prove to contain HGH, Fina, the international governing body, may turn to rule DC9.1 of its doping laws, which states that those found "trading, trafficking, distributing or selling any banned substance" shall be suspended, in the case of growth hormones, for a minimum of four years, including the next Olympic Games. Possession of such

Human growth hormone (HGH) is a concentrated form of a naturally produced hormone that helps the body build muscle tissue. Its application results in significant gains in strength and size by stimulating production of

muscle cells and strengthening connective tissue and tendons. There is no test that conclusively reveals its presence. Side-effects of HGH abuse include diabetes, liver damage, elongation of the jaw and bone damage.

substances is also covered in the rule book.

When the news reached Perth, the Beattie Park Hotel, where those Chinese who had arrived in Perth several days earlier were staying, was bombarded by media. Armed police officers with bulletproof vests were called and it was later confirmed that a warrant had been issued for the police to search the rooms of the Chinese team members. At Perth airport hours later, the Chinese were jostled by cameramen who tumbled over chairs and cracked the heads of passers-by. A six-car police escort surrounded the China team bus that Yuan was taken

to separately by police officers who struggled to fight off the pressing media.

Huang Jianxiang, a journalist with Chinese Central TV, suggested that China would have no faith in the testing of the vials: "You took the bottle away to your laboratory and you could change it. You can't frame us like this. You say in the West you are innocent until proven guilty, but we are guilty until proven innocent."

Not all Chinese swimmers, coaches and officials are innocent. Indeed, 23 have tested positive for drugs, all but one for anabolic steroids, this decade, seven of those a month after Chinese women won 12

of 16 world titles in Rome in 1994.

The incident casts serious doubts over denials of a state drugs programme in China after two of its women set world records in October to take to eight out of 13 the number of events in which Chinese women lead the world going into Perth.

The news from Sydney came barely an hour after Mustapha Larfaoui, president of Fina, the international governing body of swimming, had declared that 320 out-of-competition tests had been carried out in 1997 and had urged the media to "please stop the doping talk and

report on the stars of these championships."

Condemnation of the Chinese was widespread. Don Talbot, head of Australian swimming, claimed the Chinese had been "caught with their hand in the cookie jar." A United States team spokesman said it was "a very happy moment", while Mark Spitz, winner of six record seven Olympic gold medals in 1972, said he believed the drugs had been brought in to test whether they could "get away with it" before Sydney 2000.

Fina faced further trauma yesterday when the German swimming federation, won an injunction in the Supreme Court, forcing Fina to hand back the accreditation to its team manager Winfried Leopold. Leopold has admitted his part in the doping of swimmers during his days as a coach in East Germany.

Rusedski fails
to raise the
temperature in
desert duel

FROM ALIX RAMSAY IN DOHA

THE first tennis tournament of the year is a bit like the first week back at school — the big boys have to establish the pecking order and the new lads have to be roughed up a little. Unfortunately, not all of them take kindly to the treatment, and last night Karim Alami had a good crack at fighting back when Greg Rusedski, the No 1 seed, tried to show him who was chief milk monitor here in the second round of the Qatar Open.

Alami, from Morocco, is a stylish young chap who plays his tennis with only one eye on the opponent, the other firmly on the crowd. He loves to entertain. It may not be the most efficient way to make a living — he has yet to win a title but he has had the better of Pete Sampras and Michael Chang in his day — but it is often enough to put an opponent off his stride.

Rusedski helped Alami on his way, dropping his service in the opening game but breaking back straight away; normal service, it seemed, had been resumed. Alami's ability to improvise from every area of the court was winning him points but not the ones that mattered. Broken to love in the sixth game, the first set was effectively over, and, in dropping his next service game with a double fault and a fluffed volley, Alami seemed to have given it all away.

Rusedski served out for 6-2. The Briton was unable to get the thundering service fully warmed up, however — it is the middle of winter, even in the Persian Gulf — and he had to fend off a break point at the start of the second set before dealing with the full range of Alami's tricks. Belting away smashes in the Pete Sampras slam-dunk manner, Alami even won one point lying flat on his face, having dived to retrieve a Rusedski volley. He may have scuffed his knees but, at least he was still in contention.

Only when it came to the crunch did the flamboyance evaporate. Serving to stay in the match at 4-5 he played a steady and controlled game, but asked to do it a second time, at 5-6, the task was beyond him. He pushed a backhand long, but, in the

noise of the enthusiastic local support, he failed to hear the call. After a debate with the umpire he was nailed by a Rusedski backhand and polished off when the world No 6 clipped the net with his next return and the ball spun away out of reach. Rusedski had taught the new boy a lesson and was through 6-2, 7-5.

He will play the unorthodox Fabrice Santoro, from France, in the quarter-finals, with a potential final against Tim Henman still an alluring possibility.

Santoro is ranked No 29 in the world and has only won one title in his career, and that at his 168th attempt in Lyon last year. It was something of

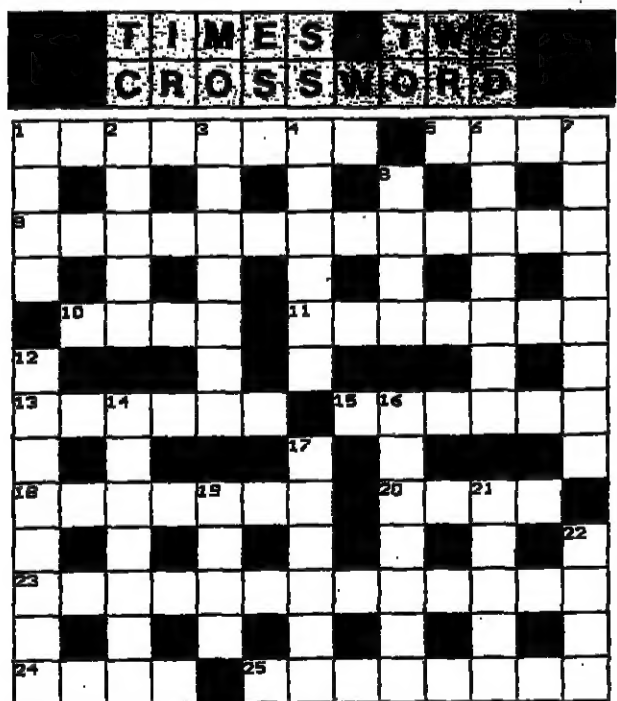


Rusedski lesson

a family achievement as Santoro trained up with his father, Marcel, at the start of the year and under his guidance as coach had his best season on the circuit, beating Thomas Muster, Sergi Bruguera and Marcelo Rios on his travels.

In the coldest winter in Qatar in years, only the heat of battle can keep the hypothermia at bay, but for one over-zealous Swiss fan it all proved too much. After Marc Rosset's defeat by Goran Ivanisevic, a long march of dubious line calls and one vital over-rule from the umpire, the spectator sought out the line judge he felt had cost his boy the match and hit him with a furred Swiss flag. It did not make him any warmer but it did make him feel better, especially when the authorities decided to turn a blind eye.

Results, page 45



No 1298

ACROSS

- 1 Apparition; guest from afar (8)
- 5 Optimism (4)
- 9 Opposition leaders (6,7)
- 10 Joke (4)
- 11 Shake with nerves (7)
- 13 Convince; state positively (6)
- 15 Breathe harshly; trick (6)
- 18 Brave girl (7)
- 20 For fear that (4)
- 23 Negligent nursery-rhyme shepherd (6,3,4)
- 24 Relaxation (8)
- 25 Most imposing (8)

DOWN

- 1 Singlet; confer (4)
- 2 Roof tile; censure (5)
- 3 Pig foot (7)
- 4 Delicate point (6)
- 6 Raise to peerage (7)
- 7 (Animal) tied up (8)
- 8 Competent (4)
- 12 Unmarried man (6)
- 14 Layer-type cloud (7)
- 16 Peaceful (weather); king-fisher (7)
- 17 One who belongs (6)
- 19 With nothing to do (4)
- 21 Crack (puzzle) (5)
- 22 Nuisance; town opposite Buda (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1297

- ACROSS: 6 Cook the books 7 Malice 8 Twenty 9 Well 10 Derisory 12 Ben Nevis 16 Rate 18 Influx 20 Unique 21 Rags to riches
- DOWN: 1 Bouillon 2 Attend 3 Nectar 4 Note 5 Skater 6 Crane 11 Straight 13 Ennued 14 Vox pop 15 Studio 17 Truss 19 Lose

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England party decamp to Jamaica
searching for an island in the sunFROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT
IN ANTIGUA

WITH a perverse inevitability, England's cricketers evacuated Antigua yesterday under the bluest skies they have seen since their arrival. Their flight to Jamaica, four days earlier than scheduled, was born out of a commendable desire for productive practice but it was made more in desperation than conviction.

On Wednesday evening, David Lloyd was seen surrounded by printouts from the Internet. These proved to be detailed weather forecasts for the entire Caribbean region and Lloyd, the England coach, was studying them in his agitation to get the show moving.

Kingston was the choice for two reasons. It was, in any event, the next scheduled stop, before the start of the match programme in Montego Bay a week today, and Lloyd had identified the southern Jamaican city as potentially the driest of the available alternatives.

"Partly cloudy," Lloyd announced, "but no appreciable rain until after the weekend. It's a lot better than the forecast for Montego Bay, while Barbados, which we also considered, has all manner of storms on the way."

Lloyd's faith in the workings

of the weathermen was touching. What was most striking, however, was his belief that the team must move on or stagnate. "We had some meetings regarding our obligations in Antigua and what has happened has been unfortunate for our hosts as well as for us," he said. "But we need practice and we need to feel we are making progress. We were not going to do that by staying put."

England's decision, made when Wednesday's high winds and heavy rain had

exhausted their optimism in Antigua, was plainly a blow to the Club Antigua company, operators of the newly completed Caribbean Cricket Centre. The scheduled one-day match involving England on Sunday was a belated opening ceremony, and that has become a casualty.

The impatience of the England group is easy to appreciate. Late in a Caribbean tour, when fatigue begins to set in, little could be more attractive than a few idle days on Antigua. When not a ball has

been bowled or struck in anger, however, it can seem close to purgatory.

Lloyd's nature will also have had plenty to do with the move. Nervous, impulsive and restless, it was Lloyd who identified the potential benefits of this extra week in Antigua, visiting the facilities at Sabina Park because there is a match on. The most they can hope for is to borrow a club ground.

The sun was shining on Kingston when the team arrived but they now face four weeks on an island where 1,000 people were murdered last year alone. Kingston is among the world's most dangerous cities. Incarceration here can make a few rainy days on Antigua seem a positive treat.



Lloyd is hoping Jamaica will provide better weather

Kenyan deluge, page 44



13 pages of Times sport

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